DIASPORIC DHARMA:
BUDDHISM AND MODERNITY ACROSS THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

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Meng Tat Chia

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DIASPORIC DHARMA:
BUDDHISM AND MODERNITY ACROSS THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Meng Tat Chia, Ph.D.

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This dissertation examines Chinese Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia; it also considers the history of Chinese migration and transregional religious circulations in the twentieth century. I use the religious careers of three Chinese monks—Chuk Mor (Zhumo 竺摩, 1913-2002), Yen Pei (Yanpei 演培, 1917-1996), and Ashin Jinarakkhita (Tizheng 體正, 1923-2002)—as case studies to explore the movements, exchanges, and innovation of Buddhist knowledge and institutions in the Malay Archipelago. In doing so, this dissertation has two primary goals. The first is to bring Chinese Buddhism into the study of Southeast Asia and demonstrate that Chinese diasporic monks were significant agents in disseminating Buddhist ideas in maritime Southeast Asia. I highlight the transnational circulations of people, ideas, and resources between Greater China and Southeast Asia. The second goal of this dissertation is to contribute to the literature that critiques the "colonial/western transformation" model in the study of Buddhism and modernity in Asian societies, and reveal that overseas Chinese monks were important actors in making maritime Southeast Asia a site of Buddhist modernism. This study seeks to situate these Buddhist monks and their transnational networks within a broader context of Chinese migration to Southeast Asia, the Buddhist reform movement in Republican China (1912-1949), the Second World War, the emergence of Communist China in 1949, and decolonization and nation-building in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore during the second half of the twentieth century.

This study argues for the need to broaden the category of "Southeast Asian Buddhism" beyond Theravāda Buddhism on mainland Southeast Asia to include South China Sea Buddhism in the maritime region of Southeast Asia. By South China Sea Buddhism, I refer to the varied forms of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia that use Mandarin Chinese, Southern Chinese dialects, and Southeast Asian languages in their liturgy and scriptures. Focusing on the histories of the relationships between migratory circulations and Buddhist modernism, this study seeks to contribute to the literature on Southeast Asian and Chinese Buddhism, Southeast Asian history, Chinese history, Buddhist modernism, and Chinese diasporic networks.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jack Meng-Tat Chia (Xie Mingda 謝明達) was born and raised in Singapore. He received a B.A. (Hons) and M.A. in History from the National University of Singapore in 2007 and 2009, respectively. In 2011, he received his second M.A. in Regional Studies - East Asia from Harvard University, where he was a Harvard-Yenching Scholar. He was awarded a Ph.D. in History from Cornell University in 2017.

For my family

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After completing my doctoral studies, I will teach at my alma mater, the National University of Singapore. I thank my colleagues Maitrii Aung-Thwin, Tim Barnard, Peter Borschberg, Chan Cheow Thia, Chan Ying Kit, Kenneth Dean, Saroja Dorairajoo, Brian Farrell, Ian Gordon, Philip Holden, Huang Jianli, Koh Choon Hwee, Koh Khee Heong, Medha Kudaisya, Kelly Lau, Lee Seung-joon, Bruce Lockhart, Joey Long, Ong Chang Woei, Maurizo Peleggi, Quek Ser Hwee, Seng Guo Quan, Su Jui-Lung, Tan Eng Chye, Tan Tai Yong, Tim Yap Fuan, Wang Gungwu, John Whalen-Bridge, and Yang Bin for their encouragement and support. The late Pattana Kitiarsa was a wonderful teacher, colleague, and friend. I regret he did not live to see this dissertation completed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

DMPN	Darjah Yang Mulia Pangkuan Negeri
G30S	Gerakan 30 September
GSKI	Gabungan Sam Kauw Indonesia
HBS	Hoogere Burger School
HCS	Hollandsch-Chinesche-School
MBI	Majelis Buddhayāna Indonesia
PAP	People's Action Party
PHS	Prins Hendrikschool
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia
PUUI	Persaudaraan Upāsaka-Upāsikā Indonesia
SAGIN	Sangha Agung Indonesia
SBWS	Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services
WALUBI	Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia

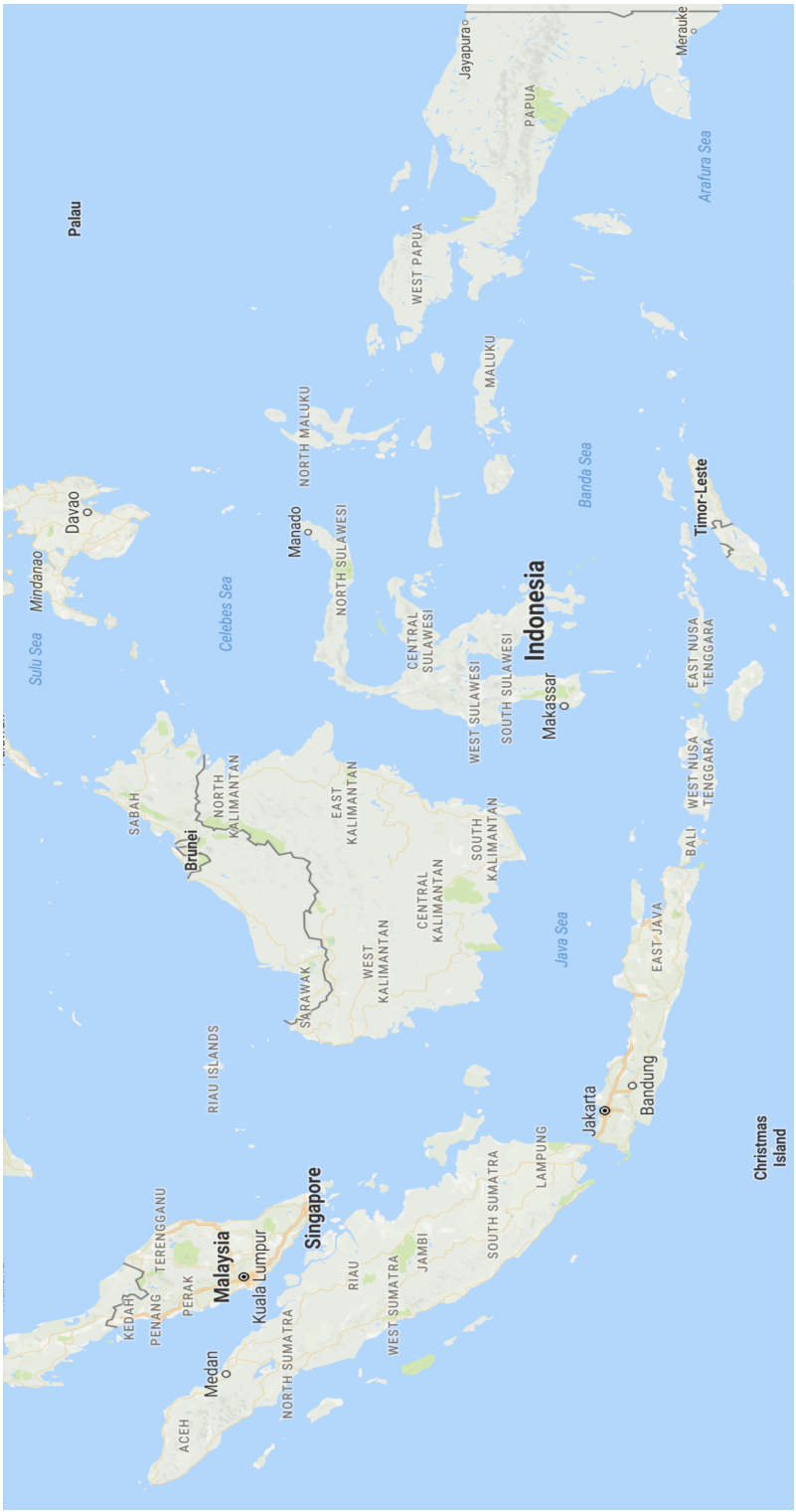
NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

This text uses pinyin romanization throughout with the exception of some local Southeast Asian (especially Bahasa Indonesia and Hokkien) terms, places, and personal names. Therefore, the names of the three protagonists are rendered as Chuk Mor (Zhumo), Yen Pei (Yanpei), and Ti Chen (Tizheng). The place names of Buddhist institutions in Southeast Asia are usually rendered in their better-known English translation. For instance, Sanhui jiangtang is rendered as Triple Wisdom Hall. Similarly, certain place names are translated literally. Jushi lin is Householder Grove. To retain legibility, for names of places that fall outside this pattern, only the final character that denotes a place is translated. Thus, Shandao si is rendered as "Shandao Monastery."

This study uses both Pāli and Sanskrit terms and names, except for certain well-known texts (such as *Diamond Sūtra* and *Heart Sūtra*), with an alternative romanization provided when helpful. The Indonesian language has absorbed numerous loanwords from Sanskrit (such as *bhikṣu* and *vihāra*). I relied on Charles Muller's *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* and Damien Keown's *A Dictionary of Buddhism* for most of my translations.

The term "Malay Archipelago" has been used to refer to the region that includes contemporary Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines. This region is sometimes referred to synonymously as island or maritime Southeast Asia. This study will focus on the southern part of the archipelago that consists of Dutch East Indies/Indonesia, Malaya/Malaysia, and Singapore. The term "Greater China" refers to the region that includes Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.

Map 1: South China and Southeast Asia
Source: Google Maps



Map 2: Present-Day Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore
Source: Google Maps

INTRODUCTION

Toward a History of South China Sea Buddhism

A bespectacled middle-aged monk greets me at the entrance of a temple in Jakarta. His temple is located at the end of a street flanked by rows of expensive looking bungalow houses. He is dressed in Chinese Mahāyāna-style saffron robes on the inside with Theravāda-style robes draped over his shoulders. I greet him in Indonesian. He responds in English. I am nervous about how he would receive me, a doctoral student who is in Indonesia to study Buddhism, a minority religion in the world's largest Muslim nation. His friendly smile and gentle manners, however, immediately put me at ease. He is Venerable Dharmavimala, who also goes by his Chinese Dharma name "Dingjing 定淨," a senior monk in Indonesia. Born and raised in a Chinese family in Indonesia, Dharmavimala completed his college education before becoming a Buddhist cleric. He and his elder brother, who is also a monk, co-founded the Vihāra Ekayāna Graha (*Guanghua yicheng chansi* 廣化一乘禪寺), which is now one of the most prominent Buddhist temples in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta.

Dharmavimala leads me to a meeting room located on the second floor of the temple. We sit across from each other at a long meeting table in big, black, cushioned chairs. His disciple brings us tea and snacks as we talk in mixed languages of English, Indonesian, and Hokkien. About a half hour into our conversation, his phone rings. "Excuse me, let me answer this," he said and left the room. As I inquisitively look

around the meeting room, I am immediately reminded of my reason for setting up the interview: Ashin Jinarakkhita, whom Indonesian Buddhists called "Sukong" (*Shigong* 師公), literally meaning "grand teacher," looks out at me from a large portrait on the wall.

This dissertation is about Chinese Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia; it is also about the history of Chinese migration and transregional religious circulations in the twentieth century.[1] I use the religious careers of three Chinese monks—Chuk Mor (Zhumo 竺摩, 1913-2002), Yen Pei (Yanpei 演培, 1917-1996), and Ashin Jinarakkhita (Tizheng 體正, 1923-2002)—as case studies to explore the movements, exchanges, and innovation of Buddhist knowledge and institutions in the Malay Archipelago. Biographies of each of these eminent monks in English are long overdue, but the focus of this dissertation is not solely biographical. Rather, I consider how their education, travel, diasporic experiences, and interactions with the postcolonial nation-state contributed to the emergence of Buddhist modernism in maritime Southeast Asia. My research into the transnational religious activities of these three monks is propelled by three questions. First, how did Chinese monks participate in

[1] I use the term "Chinese Buddhism" to refer to Buddhists and practices oriented towards Chinese language liturgy and scripture. The traditional approach to understand the history of "Chinese Buddhism" is polarized into the "transformation" and "conquest" models, discussed respectively in Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1972) and Kenneth Chen, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). Several studies have challenged the perspective of Buddhist sinicization in China. See, for instance, Robert Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002) and Zhiru, *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

trans-Asian Buddhist networks, and how did these connections play a role in the circulations of people, ideas, and resources within and without maritime Southeast Asia? Second, how did diasporic monks propagate Buddhist teachings in Southeast Asia and contribute to the process of Buddhist modernism? Third, in what ways can the study of Buddhist modernism contribute to understanding the links between history and Buddhist Studies, and the issues surrounding migration, decolonization, and nation-building in Southeast Asia?

In answering these questions, this dissertation has two primary goals. The first is to bring Chinese Buddhism into the study of Southeast Asia and demonstrate that Chinese diasporic monks were significant agents in disseminating Buddhist ideas and reconfiguring Buddhist modernism in maritime Southeast Asia. I will highlight the transnational circulations of people, ideas, and resources between Greater China and Southeast Asia.[2] The "Theravāda" Buddhists in maritime Southeast Asia are beyond the scope of this study.[3] The second goal of this dissertation is to contribute to the

[2] Greater China refers to the region that includes Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. See Harry Harding, "The Concept of 'Greater China': Themes, Variations and Reservations," *The China Quarterly* 136 (1993): 660-686.

[3] In a seminal volume entitled *How Theravāda is Theravāda?*, scholars have pointed out that use of the term "Theravāda" to refer to Pāli-language Buddhism was likely to become more prevalent after the 1930s. See, for instance, Anne M. Blackburn, "Lineage, Inheritance, and Belonging: Expressions of Monastic Affiliation from Lankā," in *How Theravāda is Theravāda?: Exploring Buddhist Identities*, eds. Peter Skilling, Jason A. Carbine, Claudio Cicuzza, and Santi Pakdeekham (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books 2012), 275-294; Todd LeRoy Perreira, "Whence Theravāda? The Modern Genealogy of an Ancient Term," in *How Theravāda is Theravāda?*, 443-571. For studies on Theravāda Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia, see for instance, Pattana Kitiarsa, "Buddha-izing a Global City-State: Transnational Religious Mobilities, Spiritual Marketplace, and Thai Migrant Monks in Singapore," *Mobilities*

literature that critiques the "colonial/western transformation" model in the study of Buddhist modernism in Asian societies, and reveal that overseas Chinese monks were important actors in making maritime Southeast Asia a site of Buddhist modernism. I focus on the southern part of the Malay Archipelago that consists of Dutch East Indies/Indonesia, Malaya/Malaysia, and Singapore. This study seeks to situate these Buddhist monks and their transnational networks within a broader context of Chinese migration to Southeast Asia, the Buddhist reform movement in Republican China (1912-1949), the Second World War, the emergence of Communist China in 1949, and decolonization and nation-building in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore during the second half of the twentieth century.

This study argues for the need to broaden the category of "Southeast Asian Buddhism" beyond Theravāda Buddhism on mainland Southeast Asia to include *South China Sea Buddhism* in the maritime region of Southeast Asia. By South China Sea Buddhism, I refer to the varied forms of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia that use Mandarin Chinese, Southern Chinese dialects, and Southeast Asian languages in their liturgy and scriptures.[4] I owe the term South China Sea Buddhism to Anne

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5, 2 (May 2010): 257-275; Jeffrey Samuels, "'Forget Not Your Old Country': Absence, Identity, and Marginalization in the Practice and Development of Sri Lankan Buddhism in Malaysia," *South Asian Diaspora* 3,1 (2011): 117-132; Anne Blackburn, "Ceylonese Buddhism in Colonial Singapore: New Ritual Spaces & Specialists, 1895-1935," *Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series* 184 (May 2012).

[4] Buddhologist Liu Yuguang 劉宇光 coins the term "Southern Chinese Buddhism" (*nanfang hanchuang fojiao* 南方漢傳佛教) to describe the Chinese Buddhism in Contemporary Malaysia. I find this term somewhat imprecise as "Southern Chinese Buddhism" can also refer to Chinese Buddhism as practiced in the Southern Chinese provinces of Fujian and Guangdong. I prefer "South China Sea Buddhism" because

Blackburn's work on "Indian Ocean Buddhism." In sketching out an intellectual case for "Indian Ocean Buddhism," Blackburn highlights the connected history of the Buddhist communities in South and Southeast Asia.[5] After reading her persuasive argument, I observed that Chinese monks played a similar role in linking the Buddhist communities between East and Southeast Asia. My dissertation will illustrate the monastic connectivity in the South China Sea during the twentieth century, which was due to Chinese migration and to larger forces of socio-political changes that took place in China and in Southeast Asia. Focusing on the histories of the relationships between migratory circulations and Buddhist modernism, this study seeks to contribute to the literature on Southeast Asian and Chinese Buddhism, Southeast Asian history, Chinese history, Buddhist modernism, and Chinese diasporic networks.

Buddhist Modernism: A Critique

Most scholarship on Buddhism in South, Southeast, and East Asia that examines the emergence of "Buddhist modernism" since the nineteenth century attributes colonialism and Westernization as the primary contributing factors to this

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this term better reflects the varied forms of "Mahāyāna" Buddhism that connected the Chinese Buddhist communities in Greater China and Southeast Asia. On "Southern Chinese Buddhism," see Liu Yuguang 劉宇光, "Jindai malaixiya nanfang hanchuan fojiao de gonggong jieru: yi guan, min liangban guozu zhuyi de jingzheng wei xianshuo 近年馬來西亞南方漢傳佛教的公共介入：以官、民兩版國族主義的競爭為線索," *Taiwan zongjiao yanjiu* 台灣宗教研究 13, 1 (2014): 99-149.

[5] Anne M. Blackburn, "Buddhist Connections in the Indian Ocean: Changes in Monastic Mobility, 1000-1500," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58, 3 (2015): 237-266; Anne M. Blackburn, "Making Buddhist Kingdoms across the Indian Ocean, 1200-1500," forthcoming.

religious phenomenon. This "colonial/western transformation" model argues that western imperialism and influence reshaped Buddhist Asia and contributed to the rise of "modern Buddhism." Donald Lopez's volume takes a step further and contends that Western Buddhist scholars were "curators of the Buddha" in their construction of Buddhist studies as an academic discipline and in their attempt to present Buddhism to the West during the period when the European colonial powers dominated much of Buddhist Asia. The essays in the volume suggest that emergence of Buddhist studies in Europe and America took place in the context of the "ideologies of empire."[6] In other words, colonialism not only transformed Buddhism in Asia but also influenced the academic production of Buddhist knowledge in order to cater to a western audience.

In the study of Buddhism in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Sri Lanka, scholars have used the terms "Buddhist Modernism," "Buddhist revival," and "Protestant Buddhism," to characterize the transformation of the religion under colonial rule.[7] Anne Blackburn points out that scholars adopted these terms to describe

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[6] Donald Lopez, ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[7] Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900: A Study of Religious Revival and Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Richard F. Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London: Routledge, 1988); Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhist Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); George Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation, and Response* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988).

Buddhist social organizations and religious practices during the colonial period as characterized by:

> (1) the rise of lay activism and authority with the concomitant decline in monastic power and prestige; (2) an increasing emphasis on the "rationalist" and scientific character of Buddhism; (3) Buddhist efforts to counter "Western" and Christian influence while adopting Christian or Euro-American forms of religious association (such as lay committees and associations) and "Western" or "modern" technologies (such as print); (4) a deepening focus and attachment to "scriptural" or "canonical" textual authority, and a diminished attachment to a larger corpus of Buddhist narratives, by individual Buddhists whose textual practice is understood to be increasingly unmediated by monastic authority.[8]

These similar characteristics can also be seen in the context of Southeast and East Asia. Scholars on Buddhism in Southeast Asia have contended that colonialism and the forces of Westernization in particular brought numerous reformations to the practice and understanding of Buddhism. Colonialism/Westernization contributed to the emergence of a Buddhist print culture and print, the rise of "reformist sangha" who were taught to "behave" in their expression of modernism, and created new

[8] Anne M. Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism: Colonialism and Modernity in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 199.

conjunctions for public concerns critical to the nation's future to be reinterpreted in light of a "Buddhist paradigm of power."[9] Although Europeans did not colonize East Asia per se, the opening of treaty ports in China and the beginning of the Meiji Restoration in Japan saw the arrival of Western ideas that contributed to the modernization efforts in the region. The forces of Westernization contributed to the growth of "reformist" monks, the establishment of Buddhist associations, the proliferation of Buddhist popular culture, discussions about science in the Republican period, and the emergence of Buddhist activism.[10] On the other hand, Japanese Buddhists embarked on a self-Orientalizing mission to repackage Buddhism into a

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[9] Somboon Suksamran, *Political Buddhism in Southeast Asia: The Role of Sangha in the Modernization of Thailand* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1977); Peter Jackson, *Buddhadasa: Theravada Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2003); Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng, *State, Society and Religious Engineering: Towards a Reformist Buddhist in Singapore* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003); Shawn Frederick McHale, *Print and Power: Confucianism, Communism, and Buddhism in the Making of Modern Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); Anne Ruth Hansen, *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity in Colonial Cambodia, 1860-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); Juliane Schober, *Modern Buddhist Conjunctures in Myanmar: Cultural Narratives, Colonial Legacies, and Civil Society* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011); Alicia Marie Turner, *Saving Buddhism: The Impermanence of Religion in Colonial Burma* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014).

[10] Don A. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Francesca Tarocco, *The Cultural Practices of Modern Chinese Buddhism: Attuning the Dharma* (London: Routledge, 2008); Gregory Adam Scott, "Conversion by the Book: Buddhist Print Culture in Early Republican China" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2013); James Brooks Jessup, "The Householder Elite: Buddhist Activism in Shanghai, 1920-1956" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010); Lei Kuan Rongdao Lai, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2013); Erik J. Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism: Early Twentieth-Century Engagements* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

modern world religion with specific appeal to the West while simultaneously reclaiming authority for the religion in the rapid changing Japanese society in the late nineteenth century.[11] In sum, the present literature has demonstrated how the forces of colonialism and westernization transformed Buddhism and contributed to various Buddhist "reform" and "revival" movements in modern Asia.

Anne Blackburn's study, however, has shown that newly imported discourses and forms of social identification introduced to the colonial Lanka society did not always displace preexisting Buddhist ideas and practices. Blackburn points out that in Hikkaduve Sumangala's case, "many deeply historical perceptions of affiliation and social responsibility, intellectual styles, and ways of navigating the highly competitive world of monastic life held steady."[12] My dissertation will build on the works of Blackburn to demonstrate that Chinese Buddhist modernism in maritime Southeast Asia was neither a product of colonialism nor wholesale westernization. I contend that Chinese monks were agents of knowledge production in the process of selective reformation of Chinese Buddhism by reconfiguring Buddhist ideas through contestation and negotiation. I will show that these modernist monks not only propagated Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia, but also in making the region a site of Buddhist modernism.

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[11] Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Richard M. Jaffe, "Seeking Śākyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 30, 1 (Winter 2004): 65-96.

[12] Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism*, xii-xiii.

The term "Buddhist modernism" requires some discussion. Anne Hansen suggests that Khmer Buddhist modernism, which emerged in colonial Cambodia can be understood in ethical terms as "a rationalist shift in Buddhist intellectual sensibilities about temporality and purification, a shift that gave a heightened significance to the everyday actions and relationships of ordinary individuals in the here and now of modern life."[13] The modernist monks in Hansen's study promoted ethical values that combined their understandings of what it meant to live in the modern world with interpretations of what it meant to be a good Buddhist. My dissertation follows Hansen's definition of Buddhist modernism. I observed similar characteristics of Buddhist modernism in the three cases I studied: (1) propagated Buddhist doctrines which the monks claimed were relevant to the modern life and the modern society, and (2) relied upon scriptural references and historical claims of orthodoxy to interpret what it meant to be a Buddhist citizen in the postcolonial nation-state.

My analysis is informed by the work of David McMahan, which argues that "Buddhist modernism" is neither an exclusively western project nor simply a representation of the "eastern Other." McMahan suggests that many key modernizers of Buddhism have been Asian reformers educated in both Buddhist and western thought. He adds that some Buddhist reformers accepted Buddhist categories as modernist discourse only to turn around to critique the weakness of modernism, resist

[13] Hansen, *How to Behave*, 3-4.

the colonialism of the West, and assert their own form of "religious or national particularity."[14] This study draws on the works of Hansen and McMahan to demonstrate that Buddhist modernism in maritime Southeast Asia was *both* a modernist religious movement that sought to make claims of the relevance of classical Buddhist doctrines to issues of the time, as well as an assertion of religious and national particularity. By looking closely at monks such as Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Ashin Jinarakkhita and their networks, we see how their ideas of Buddhist modernism helped propel them to prominence in the context of nation-building in postcolonial Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. Each of these monks used Buddhist doctrines and historical memories to negotiate and justify the relevance of Buddhism in their respective nation-states.

Rethinking "Southeast Asian Buddhism"

Mention "Southeast Asian Buddhism" and what comes to mind is often Theravāda Buddhism, the dominant religion in the mainland Southeast Asian states of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. Needless to say, Southeast Asianists have long been interested in studying how Buddhism played a role in shaping the history, culture, and politics of mainland Southeast Asia. While Vietnam is considered a part of mainland Southeast Asia, Vietnamese Buddhism, which is mainly of the Mahāyāna tradition, is oftentimes regarded as a part of East Asian Buddhism, which follows the

[14] David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.

Chinese-language Canon and is widely practiced in the East Asian countries of China, Japan, and Korea. In contrast, maritime Southeast Asia conjures the image of the Malay Archipelago consisting of the Muslim-majority Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, as well as the Catholic Philippines (Singapore is deemed an anomaly because of the predominant Chinese population). Scholars of Southeast Asia have long emphasized the cultural and historical differences between mainland and maritime Southeast Asia by highlighting the religious divide between mainland Theravāda Buddhism and maritime Islam and Catholicism to conceptualize the religious diversity of Southeast Asia as a region.[15] Therefore, Southeast Asianists have frequently neglected the presence of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia, and its significance among Chinese communities in the predominantly Islam and Catholic region.

On the other hand, scholars of Buddhism have often limited the study of "Southeast Asian Buddhism" to the Theravāda Buddhist majority on mainland Southeast Asia.[16] For instance, Donald Swearer's seminal work *The Buddhist World of*

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[15] See, for instance, David Joel Steinberg, ed., *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), chapter 5; Barbara Watson Andaya, *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), chapter 3; Craig Lockard, *Southeast Asia in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), chapters 4-5. Robert L. Winzeler, *The Peoples of Southeast Asia Today: Ethnography, Ethnology, and Change in a Complex Region* (Lanham, Md: AltaMira Press, 2011), chapter 9; Anthony Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), chapter 5.

[16] See, for instance, Pattana Kitiarsa, "Beyond the Weberian Trails: An Essay on the Anthropology of Southeast Asian Buddhism," *Religion Compass* 3 (2009): 200-224; Donald K. Swearer, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010); Paul Williams, and Patrice Ladwig, eds., *Buddhist Funeral Cultures of Southeast Asia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012);

Southeast Asia focuses only on the Theravāda Buddhism in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia.[17] Pattana Kitiarsa's state of the field article also limits the study of "Southeast Asian Buddhism" to "Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia," and suggests that "Theravāda Buddhism is one of the most important fields of inquiry within a larger context of Southeast Asian studies."[18] Anne Hansen's article on "Modern Buddhism" in Southeast Asia discusses the Buddhist reform movements in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, although she recognizes the presence of a vibrant Chinese Buddhist minority community in Malaysia at the end of her essay.[19] In other words, previous scholarship has considered the category "Southeast Asian Buddhism" to be almost synonymous to Theravāda Buddhism.

There are several possible reasons to explain the mainland Theravāda Buddhism—maritime Islam (and Catholicism) divide in the study and historiography of Southeast Asia. First, this could be attributed to the historiography of writing nation-state histories of Southeast Asia. Scholars of Southeast Asian Buddhism and scholars of Southeast Asian history in general tend to write the narrative of Southeast Asian countries in a linear fashion from early modern Buddhist kingdoms to modern Buddhist majority nation-states. The narrative of the evolution of Buddhist kingdoms misses the Chinese presence and the connectivity of Buddhist monks in the South

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Anne Ruth Hansen, "Modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia," in *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian History*, ed. Norman G Owen (New York: Routledge, 2014), 224-234.

[17] Interestingly, Swearer also included Sri Lanka in his discussion of "Southeast Asian Buddhism." See Swearer, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia.*

[18] Kitiarsa, "Beyond the Weberian Trails."

[19] Hansen, "Modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia," 232.

China Sea. A second reason could be the form of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia. The majority of the Buddhists in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore are ethnic Chinese adhering to "Mahāyāna" Buddhism. Therefore, scholars interested in Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asian states tend to come from a background of Sinology and East Asian Buddhist Studies, and to consider Chinese Buddhism in Southeast Asia as an extension of Chinese Buddhism rather than as "Southeast Asian Buddhism." Additionally, many published their works in Chinese, which are inaccessible to Southeast Asianists who do not read the language.[20] Consequently, there is a lack of conversation and engagement between scholars working on Chinese Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia and scholars of Theravāda Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia. Third, and closely related to the second reason, academic training and institutional limitations create a gulf between scholars trained in Southeast Asian Buddhism and in East Asian Buddhism. While students of Southeast Asian Buddhism are trained in Pāli and mainland Southeast Asian languages, students of East Asian Buddhism usually study Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and French. For this reason, scholars of Southeast Asian Buddhism are equipped with "country-

[20] See, for instance, Shi Chuanfa 釋傳發, *Xinjiapo fojiao fazhan shi* 新加坡佛教發展史 (Singapore: Xinjiapo fojiao jushilin, 1997); Chen Qiuping 陳秋平, *Yimin yu fojiao: Ying zhimin shidai de bingcheng fojiao* 移民與佛教: 英殖民時代的檳城佛教 (Johor: Nanfang xueyuan 2004); Shi Kaidi 釋開諦, *Nanyou yunshui qing: Fojiao dade honghua xingma jishi (1888-2005)* 南游雲水情: 佛教大德弘化星馬記事 (1888-2005), vol. 1 (Penang: Poh Oo Toong Temple, 2010); Shi Kaidi 釋開諦, *Nanyou yunshui qing xupian: Fojiao dade honghua xingma jishi (1888-2005)* 南游雲水情續篇: 佛教大德弘化星馬記事 (1888-2005), vol. 2 (Penang: Poh Oo Toong Temple, 2013); Xu Yuantai 許源泰, *Yan'ge yu moshi: Xinjiapo daojiao he fojiao chuanbo yanjiu* 沿革與模式: 新加坡道教和佛教傳播研究 (Singapore: National University of Singapore Department of Chinese Studies and Global Publishing, 2013).

specific" linguistic and cultural knowledge under the assumption that they will be studying Theravāda Buddhism on the mainland.

In his article "Buddhists in Modern Southeast Asia," Justin McDaniel cautions that the Theravādins are not the only Buddhists in Southeast Asia, but there are also Mahāyāna Buddhists in the region, especially in Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia. He also points out that Theravādins are not limited to mainland Southeast Asia, but many from Thailand are now serving as Buddhist "missionaries" in Indonesia.[21] So far, there has been little research on both Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia.[22] The paucity of literature contrasts with the extensive studies of Theravāda Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia.[23] This study aims to address the

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[21] Justin Thomas McDaniel, "Buddhists in Modern Southeast Asia," *Religion Compass* 4, 11 (2010): 659.

[22] There are few monograph-length studies in the English-language. See, for example, Colin McDougall, *Buddhism in Malaya* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1956); Mohamed Yusoff Ismail, *Buddhism and Ethnicity: Social Organization of a Buddhist Temple in Kelantan* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993); Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng, *State, Society and Religious Engineering: Towards a Reformist Buddhism in Singapore* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003); Y. D. Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore: A Short Narrative History* (Singapore: Skylark Publications, 2005); Irving Chan Johnson, *The Buddha on Mecca's Verandah: Encounters, Mobilities, and Histories Along the Malaysian-Thai Border* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012); Ari C. Dy, SJ, *Chinese Buddhism in Catholic Philippines* (Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2015). For bibliographies on Buddhism in Malaysia and Singapore, see Jeffrey Samuels and Hun Lye, "Buddhism in Malaysia," *Oxford Bibliographies* (September 13, 2012), http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0005.xml (accessed February 24, 2017); Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "Bibliography of Buddhism in Singapore," https://jackchia.wordpress.com/resources/ (accessed February 24, 2017).

[23] For bibliographies on Buddhism in Southeast Asia, see, for instance, Anne Blackburn, "Buddhism in Southeast Asia," *Oxford Bibliographies* (March 23, 2010), http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-

mainland Theravāda Buddhism—maritime Islam and Catholicism religious divide in the study of modern Southeast Asia, and seeks to shed some light on the much-neglected Buddhist communities in the Malay Archipelago. It also attempts to bridge the study of Southeast Asian Buddhism and the study of Chinese Buddhism.

Chinese Buddhism in the Twentieth Century: A Missing Link

Despite the voluminous work that has been done on Chinese Buddhism, until the last decade little attention has been given to the study of Chinese Buddhism in the twentieth century. Holmes Welch's trilogy on Chinese Buddhism in the Republican (1912-1949) and early Mao (1949-1966) periods, which laid the groundwork for this field of study, offered valuable insights into the mechanics of institutional Buddhism, the rise of Buddhist revival movements, and the subsequent political interference and disruption of Buddhist activities with the establishment of a communist regime.[24] While Welch's pathbreaking research highlighted the potential and significance of this field of study for both Chinese Buddhist studies and modern Chinese history, the inability to conduct research in China coupled with the closure of Buddhist monasteries during the Cultural Revolution limited interested scholars in the study of

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9780195393521-0152.xml (accessed February 24, 2017); "Southeast Asia Research Guide: Buddhism in Southeast Asia," (September 22, 2016), http://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/c.php?g=105536&p=687510 (accessed February 24, 2017).

[24] Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Holmes Welch, *Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968); Holmes Welch, *Buddhism under Mao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).

the modern history of Chinese Buddhism. With the reopening of mainland China and the rise of "Humanistic Buddhism" (*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教) in Taiwan in the 1980s, Chinese-language scholarship has started to make several contributions to the study of Chinese Buddhism in the Republican period.[25]

In the last decade, scholars began to pay closer attention and produce English-language scholarship on this field. These recent studies have emphasized the rise of "Modern Chinese Buddhism" and the attempt to reform Buddhism during the Republican period. Don Pittman's seminal work sheds much light on Taixu's Buddhist revival movements.[26] Raoul Birnbaum tells the story of the dramatic transformation of Li Shutong 李叔同 from a famous "modern man" to an eminent monk named Hongyi.[27] Xue Yu has explored how nationalism motivated Buddhist monks to knowingly violate the disciplinary codes of Buddhism in order to contribute in the war effort during the Sino-Japanese War.[28] Francesca Tarocco's work on Buddhist print and musical culture in Republican China suggests that Chinese elites were not only

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[25] See, for instance, Jiang Canteng 江燦騰, *Ming Qing minguo fojiao sixiang shilun* 明清民國佛教思想史論 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1996); Li Shaobing 李少兵, "Minguo shiqi fojiao yu jidujiao sichao guanxi kao 民國時期佛教與基督教思潮關係考," *Lishi dang'an* 歷史檔案 4 (1996): 112- 117; Li Shaobing 李少兵, "Minguo fojiao gexin yundong zhong de zhen jia fotu zhi bian 民國佛教革新運動中的真假佛徒之辨," *Shixue yuekan* 史學月刊 2 (1997): 65-69; Wang Rongguo 王榮國, *Fujian fojiao shi* 福建佛教史 (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 1997).

[26] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism.*

[27] Raoul Birnbaum, "Master Hongyi Looks Back: A Modern Man Becomes a Monk in Twentieth-Century China," in *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition*, eds. Steven Heine and Charles S. Prebish (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 77-124.

[28] Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle against Japanese Aggressions, 1931-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

interested in nationalism and revolution but also in an array of modern Buddhist cultural practices.[29] James Carter uses the case study of Tanxu 倓虛, a monk from Northern China, to highlight the major socio-political changes that occurred in Chinese society from the late Qing, through the Republican period, and until the eve of the Cultural Revolution.[30] Erik Hammerstrom looks at the ways Chinese Buddhists struggled to understand the increasing influence of science and scientism during the late Qing and Republican periods.[31] A recent volume examines the "dynamic and creative roles" played by Buddhists and Buddhism in modern China from the early twentieth century to contemporary times.[32]

Several recent dissertations further contribute to this burgeoning literature. James Brooks Jessup suggests that Shanghai's elites contributed to the construction of a new lay Buddhist "civic culture" in China from the 1920s to the 1950s, which led to the creation of a newly redefined identity as a Buddhist "householder" (*jushi* 居士).[33] Justin Ritzinger argues that Taixu reinvented the Maitreya's cult to promote a vision that provides a place for two "hypergoods": Buddhahood and utopia, and perfected self and perfected society.[34] Gregory Scott contends that print culture acted as a

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[29] Tarocco, *Modern Chinese Buddhism*.
[30] James Carter, *Heart of Buddha, Heart of China: The Life of Tanxu, a Twentieth-Century Monk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[31] Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*.
[32] Jan Kiely and J. Brooks Jessup, eds., *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
[33] Jessup, "The Householder Elite."
[34] Justin R. Ritzinger, "Anarchy in the Pure Land: Tradition, Modernity, and the Reinvention of the Cult of Maitreya in Republican China" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2010).

"catalyst for change" among Buddhists in China from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s.[35] Lei Kuan Rongdao Lai discusses the history of modern monastic education in China, and investigates the consequences of this new system of religious education.[36]

While these studies offer fascinating insights into the development of Chinese Buddhism during the Republican and a lesser extent into the era of the People's Republic, they suffer from two shortcomings. First, previous studies adopted primarily a "China-centered" perspective focusing only on the development of Chinese Buddhism within China. The Republican period saw the beginning of the globalization of Chinese Buddhism as a result of Chinese migration and improvement in transnational communications. Therefore, there is a need to consider the cross-border interactions and networks between Buddhist clerics and devotees in China and abroad. Second, current literature neglects the significance of Chinese migration and the role of the overseas Chinese in the propagation and innovation of Chinese Buddhism in China and abroad. In fact, Holmes Welch simply dismissed the importance of Chinese migration and the spread of Buddhism overseas:

[35] Scott, "Conversion by the Book."
[36] Lai, "Praying for the Republic."

> Overseas Chinese tended to be more conservative and religiously inclined than their cousins at home. They did not face the task of modernizing China.[37]
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> […]
>
> I have not heard of other monasteries in China that had such widespreading or deep-rooted connections overseas. Kushan may have been unique. But it was extremely common for monks and lay pilgrims to go back and forth between overseas Chinese communities and the "famous mountains" at home.[38]

Welch's statements on the insignificance of overseas Chinese seemed to conflict with the recent scholarship on Buddhist revival in post-Cultural Revolution China. A number of scholars have noticed the vital contributions of the overseas Chinese in the restoration of Buddhist institutions in the southeastern part of China.[39] Anthropologist Yoshiko Ashiwa and sociologist David Wank have argued that transnational networks of clergy and devotees, which are constituted through affiliations of kinship, loyalty and region, have facilitated the allocations of personnel,

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[37] Welch, *Buddhist Revival in China*, 190.
[38] Ibid., 193.
[39] Yoshiko Ashiwa, "Dynamics of the Buddhist Revival Movement in South China: State, Society, and Transnationalism," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 32 (2000): 15-31; Raoul Birnbaum, "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn," in *Religion in China Today*, ed. Daniel L. Overmyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 122-144; Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, "The Globalization of Chinese Buddhism: Clergy and Devotee Networks in the Twentieth Century," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2, 2 (2005): 217-237; Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, "State, Association, and Religion in Southeast China: The Politics of a Reviving Buddhist Temple," *Journal of Asian Studies* 65, 2 (2006): 337-359.

money, and legitimacy that both institutionalized Buddhism in Southeast Asian and North American overseas Chinese communities, as well as supported its revival in late twentieth century China. Drawing on their fieldwork at the Nanputuo Monastery, an important Buddhist center in Xiamen, Yoshiko Ashiwa and David Wank were able to identify the religious networks that connected the temples, clergy, and devotees in Southeast Asia and North America with the monastery in Xiamen since the 1980s.[40] While the authors have attempted to offer some historical background to the growth of the Chinese diaspora and the movement of Buddhism overseas in the early twentieth century, their primary goal is to explain the intertwining relationship between Chinese transnational networks and religious revival in China since the 1980s.

My research seeks to challenge Welch's claims on the apathetic attitude of the overseas Chinese.[41] Several issues need to be discussed in this missing link. The first issue is on Chinese migration and the spread of Chinese Buddhism to Southeast Asia. The second issue concerns the participation of Chinese monks in transnational networks, which contributed to the circulation of monks, scriptural knowledge, and money between China and Southeast Asia. The third issue is about the contributions of diasporic monks to the advancement of Buddhist modernism in maritime Southeast Asia. The last deals with the rise of maritime Southeast Asia as a new center for Chinese Buddhism especially after the outbreak of Cultural Revolution in 1966. My dissertation builds upon Zhang Wenxue's recent monograph, which uses the case

[40] Ashiwa and Wank, "The Globalization of Chinese Buddhism."
[41] Welch, *Buddhist Revival in China*, 190-193.

study of Venerable Zhuandao 轉道 to demonstrate the connected history of Buddhism in China and Singapore during the first half of the twentieth century.[42] Drawing on Tu Wei-Ming's concept of "Cultural China," whereby he argues that the "periphery" displaced China as the cultural center for the articulation of "Chineseness," this study seeks to consider how Chinese Buddhism in the Southeast Asian "periphery" emerged as a Buddhist "cultural center."[43] I will illustrate the dynamics of trans-Asian Buddhist networks and reveal how transnational religious circulations have led to the modernization and globalization of Chinese Buddhism.

Bringing Religion into Chinese Diasporic Networks

This dissertation also aims to bring religion into the study of Chinese diaspora networks. Following the rise of China and the increasing attention being paid to Chinese diasporic studies in recent years, there is a burgeoning literature on Chinese diasporic networks. Nevertheless, these works have largely neglected the role of religion in Chinese transnational networks. By "religion," I refer to religious institutions, people, and ideas. Scholarship on Chinese diasporic networks can be broadly divided into three major categories: migrant networks, *qiaoxiang* 僑鄉 ties, and business networks. The literature on migrant networks focuses on the diasporic interconnectivity of the Chinese migrants across the period of the last half of the

[42] Zhang Wenxue 張文學, *Haiqing Zhuandao chanshi* 海清轉道禪師 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2017).
[43] Tu Wei-Ming, "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center," *Daedalus* 120, 2 (Spring 1991): 1-32.

nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. Madeline Hsu and Adam McKeown, for instance, look at the Chinese migrants beyond their host countries and focus on the transnational linkages and circulation of resources within a broader perspective.[44]

Qiaoxiang ties, which refer to the ties of the Chinese diaspora to their hometowns, are another important form of diasporic networks connecting the overseas Chinese and China since the Reform and Open-Door Policy in 1978.[45] Ethnic Chinese living abroad contributed to the growth of South China's economy in general, and the Fujian and Guangdong *qiaoxiang* provinces in particular. To study this interesting phenomenon, Leo Douw and Frank Pieke founded the *Qiaoxiang* Ties Project in 1995 to look at how *qiaoxiang* ties work and continue to influence the development of Chinese transnational enterprises in the course of the twentieth century.[46] Studies by scholars such as Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng, Liu Hong, and Tan Chee-Beng show that *qiaoxiang* ties are important diasporic networks that connected the Chinese overseas to

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[44] Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000); Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900-1936* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[45] Cen Huang, Zhuang Guoto and Kyoto Tanaka, "Introduction," in *New Studies on Chinese Overseas and China*, ed. Cen Huang, Zhuang Guoto and Kyoto Tanaka (Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies, 2000), 1-3.

[46] Cen Huang and Michael R. Godley, "Appendix Chapter: A Note on the Study of *Qiaoxiang* Ties," in *Qiaoxiang Ties: Interdisciplinary Approaches to "Cultural Capitalism*," eds. Leo M. Douw, Cen Huang and Michael R. Godley (London: Kegan Paul International, 1999), 308.

China since the Open-Door era, and contributed to the accelerated growth of South China, and the *qiaoxiang* provinces in particular.[47]

The literature on business networks, the third major category of Chinese diasporic networks, is huge and dominated by business historians, economists, geographers, and sociologists. Jason Lim has explored the transregional tea trade between Fujian and Singapore.[48] Gordon Redding argues that "alliance building" among the overseas Chinese allows them to magnify their respective firms' abilities and maximize the transnational reach of their networks.[49] James Rauch and Vitor Trindade contend that these networks have an economically greater positive impact on bilateral trade in differentiated goods than homogeneous ones between the 1980s and 1990s.[50] While Thomas Menkhoff and Solvay Gerke's volume challenges the "invulnerability myth" of ethnic Chinese businesses by analyzing the impacts of the Asian financial crisis on Chinese firms in the region and provide empirical data on the transnational collaboration and actual investment patterns between the Chinese

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[47] Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng, *Rebuilding the Ancestral Village: Singaporeans in China* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Liu Hong, "Old Linkages, New Networks: The Globalization of Overseas Chinese Voluntary Associations and Its Implications," *The China Quarterly* 155 (September 1998): 588-609; Tan Chee-Beng, ed., *Chinese Transnational Networks* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007).
[48] Jason Lim, *Linking an Asian Transregional Commerce in Tea: Overseas Chinese Merchants in the Fujian-Singapore Trade, 1920-1960* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
[49] Gordon Redding, "Overseas Chinese Networks: Understanding the Enigma," *Long Range Planning* 28, 1 (1995): 61-69; see also Gordon Redding, *The Spirit of Chinese Capitalism* **(**Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1990).
[50] James E. Rauch and Vitor Trindade, "Ethnic Chinese Networks in International Trade," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 84, 1 (Feb 2002): 116-130.

diaspora in Southeast Asia and China,[51] Edmund Terence Gomez and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao argue that development of Chinese enterprises cannot be understood as a function of Chinese culture, and attribute the dynamism of Chinese enterprise to "intra-ethnic competition" rather than "intra-ethnic cooperation."[52] Although such works sought to expand understandings of the connections between China and the overseas Chinese, they focused primarily on the circulations of capital, finance, and goods, and therefore overlooked the existence of transnational religious networks and the circulations of religious knowledge and resources. A reason for this scholarly bias towards focusing on the commercial and economic dimension of Chinese diasporic networks can be attributed to the general interest of the broader academic community in their attempt to explain how overseas Chinese contributed to China's "economic miracle" since the open-door period. In other words, thanks to the Chinese diasporic networks, overseas Chinese were able to contribute to China's rapid development.

It was rather recent that the role of religion in the study of Chinese diasporic networks, formerly an underexplored area, has been given some well-deserved attention. The resurgence of these religious diasporic networks, as some scholars argued, can be attributed to religious attachment to founding ancestors and clan

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[51] Thomas Menkhoff and Solvay Gerke, "Asia's Transformation and the Role of the Ethnic Chinese," in *Chinese Entrepreneurship and Asian Business Networks*, ed. Thomas Menkhoff and Solvay Gerke (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002, 3-19.

[52] Edmund Terence Gomez and Gregor Benton, "Introduction: De-essentializing Capitalism: Chinese Enterprise, Transnationalism, and Identity," in *Chinese Enterprise, Transnationalism, and Identity*, ed. Edmund Terence Gomez and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-19.

deities.[53] Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the revival of diasporic networks greatly contributed to the religious revival in Southeast China.[54] Nevertheless, these recent works on Chinese diasporic religious networks suffer from two shortcomings. First, little attention has been given to understanding the historical processes behind network building. Scholars have neglected migration and missionary activity as a process of network building. Rather, they are primarily interested in the more immediate outcomes of current transnational connections on China's religio-economic developments. Second, there is no attempt to question the distinctions between economic and *qiaoxiang* networks from religious networks. In fact, it seems that

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[53] Tan Chee-Beng (Chen Zhiming) 陳志明 and Wu Cuirong 吳翠蓉, "Shishan kuajing guanxi yu jingji huodong 詩山跨境關係與經濟活動," in *Kuaguo wangluo yu huanan qiaoxiang: Wenhua, rentong he shehui bianqian* 跨國網絡與華南僑鄉: 文化、認同和社會變遷, ed. Chen Zhiming 陳志明, Ding Yuling 丁毓玲, and Wang Lianmao 王連茂 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2006), 249-269; Zeng Ling 曾玲, "Zushen chongbai: Dongnanya huaren yu zujidi wenhua niudai zhi jian'gou—Yi Xinjiapo Penglai si de liuge xingshimiao weili 祖神崇拜: 東南亞華人與祖籍地文化紐帶之建構—以新加坡蓬萊寺的六個姓氏廟為例," in *Kuaguo wangluo yu huanan qiaoxiang*, 139-162; Zeng Ling 曾玲, "Shequn zhenghe de lishi jiyi yu 'Zuji rentong' xiangzheng: Xinjiapo Huaren de zushen chongbai 社群整合的歷史記憶與"祖籍認同"象徵: 新加坡華人的祖神崇拜," in *Minjian wenhua yu huaren shehui* 民間文化與華人社會, ed. Li Weiyi 李緯毅 (Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 2006), 117-133; Tan Chee-Beng, "Introduction: Chinese Overseas, Transnational Networks, and China," in *Chinese Transnational Networks*, ed. Tan Chee-Beng (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 1-19; Kenneth Dean, "The Return Visits of Overseas Chinese to Ancestral Village in Putian, Fujian," in *Faith on Display: Faiths on Display: Religion, Tourism, and the Chinese State*, ed. Tim Oakes and Donald S. Sutton (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 235-263; Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "A Recent Quest for Religious Roots: The Revival of the Guangze Zunwang Cult and its Sino-Southeast Asian Networks, 1978-2009," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 41, 2 (November 2013): 91-123.

[54] Ashiwa and Wank, "State, Association, and Religion in Southeast China"; Ashiwa and Wank, "The Globalization of Chinese Buddhism"; Birnbaum, "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn"; Ashiwa, "Dynamics of the Buddhist Revival Movement in South China."

secular networks are hardly different from religious ones in that both forms of diasporic connections simply brought wealth from the overseas Chinese back to China and led to the rebuilding of ancestral temples and Buddhist monasteries.

Buddhist monastic and temple networks were not only contacts for commercial enterprise but also facilitated the flow of people and ideas across geographical space.[55] In a seminal work, Holmes Welch suggests that Chinese Buddhist monks and devotees were held together by "a series of networks of affiliation, superimposed haphazardly one upon the other."[56] He highlights three forms of Buddhist networks of affiliation. One form of Buddhist networks is based on religious kinship: tonsure, dharma, and ordination. The second is based on loyalty to a charismatic monk. A third form of Buddhist affiliations lies in regionalism as seen in cliques of monks who speak the same dialect. More significantly, Welch points out how these networks formed a "geodesic dome" that connected one Buddhist to another in mutual support.[57] My study draws upon Welch's notion of "Buddhist affiliations" to analyze the flow of Buddhist clerics and religious ideas. I will show that Buddhist networks facilitated the transnational circulation of people, ideas, and resources between China and Southeast Asia.

[55] Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism*, xi.
[56] Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 403.
[57] Ibid., 403-407.

Sources and Chapter Overview

This dissertation is based on a broad range of sources, including collected works (*wenji* 文集), commemorative books (*jinian tekan* 紀念特刊), videos, songs, periodicals, unpublished temple records, archival documents, liturgical texts, temple gazetteers, epigraphic materials, and oral history interviews. I conducted 18 months of multi-sited archival/library research and fieldwork in Indonesia (Bandung, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Medan, and Surabaya), Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Malacca, Penang, and Perak), Singapore, China (Fujian), Hong Kong, and Taiwan (Chiayi, Hsinchu, Kaohsiung, and Taipei). The main research sources are collected works, commemorative materials, and temple publications. The collected works of Chuk Mor and Yen Pei include recordings of their Dharma lectures, formal speeches, casual writings, letters, and photographs. The autobiographies of Chuk Mor and Yen Pei in the collected works are especially useful for sketching their life and times. Their autobiographies contain candid and detailed recollections of events and people that they had encountered over the years.[58] Although Ashin Jinarakkhita did not write an autobiography, he commissioned his lay disciple, Edij Juangari, to write his biography. This highly hagiographical biography was based on three interviews with Ashin Jinarakkhita and 46 interviews with disciples, friends, and associates of the monk.[59] Additionally, commemorative books often published with limited print runs to

[58] Chuk Mor 竺摩, *Xingjiao guo qianqiu* 行腳過千秋 (Penang: Triple Wisdom Hall Dharma Publication, 2003); Yen Pei 演培, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai* 一個凡愚僧的自白 (Kaohsiung: Ciyuan chansi, 1999).

[59] Edij Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita* (Bandung: Yayasan Penerbit Karaniya, 1995).

celebrate an anniversary or special occasion of Buddhist organizations contain important speeches, congratulatory messages, newspaper reports, and photographs. Other commemorative materials include documentaries, video clips, and songs. These audio and visual recordings, which continue the images and voices of these monks, offer a window into their prolific careers. Together, these valuable sources allow me to trace the activities and networks of Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Ashin Jinarakkhita within and without the maritime region of Southeast Asia.

Besides the print sources, I visited temples and archives to search for unpublished temple records and archival documents on Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Ashin Jinarakkhita. Often highly official, these materials present a second perspective on Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia, shedding further light on issues that arise in the collected works and commemorative materials. This dissertation also uses thirteen oral history interviews that I conducted during my fieldwork between 2014 and 2015 (see Appendix 1 for a list of informants). I interviewed clerics and lay Buddhists who were disciples or associates of the three protagonists. The oral histories help reveal the private experiences with these monks embedded in larger contexts and changes, and complement the information provided in various written sources.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 looks at Chinese migration to maritime Southeast Asia between the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, explaining how the overseas Chinese came to play a pivotal role in spreading Buddhism from China to the Malay Archipelago. It discusses the

form of Buddhism practiced by the overseas Chinese communities prior to the introduction of institutional Buddhism towards the end of the nineteenth century. This chapter also discusses how the arrival of Chinese monastic sojourners and settlers contributed to the expansion of institutional Buddhism, presenting important historical background for the remaining chapters of the dissertation.

Chapters 2-4 focus on the religious careers of Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Ashin Jinarakkhita in the second half of the twentieth century. Chapter 2 looks at the transnational career of Chuk Mor, examining his activities and religious spaces in Malaysia during the second half of the twentieth century. It demonstrates how Chuk Mor redefined the basis of "being Buddhist" in Malaysia based on the ideas of "Human-life Buddhism" (*rensheng fojiao* 人生佛教), and encouraged intra-religious conversion by inventing a Malaysian Chinese Buddhist identity that emphasized the this-worldly practice of Buddhism, propagation of an "orthodox" Buddhism (*zhengxin fojiao* 正信佛教), and established new Buddhist spaces for the promotion of religious education. Chapter 3 focuses on the transnational biography of Yen Pei, revealing how Singapore's Buddhist history was intertwined with the larger history of the modernization and globalization of Chinese Buddhism in the twentieth century. Yen Pei drew on ideas of Humanistic Buddhism (*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教) for his missionary endeavor and the promotion of Buddhist education, and later, mobilized Singaporean Buddhists to be socially engaged and to contribute to social welfare. Chapter 4 examines Ashin Jinarakkhita's vision of Buddhist modernism that encouraged non-sectarian doctrines and practices to be in line with the postcolonial

Indonesian state. It also explores the monk's endeavor to make Buddhism less Chinese in order to safeguard the survival of Buddhism as a minority religion in the world's largest Muslim nation. Ashin Jinarakkhita founded the Buddhayāna movement, which embraced diverse Buddhist denominations and doctrines, emphasized the need to propagate an Indonesian Buddhism that celebrated unity in diversity. The concluding chapter situates these three cases into a larger narrative of South China Sea Buddhism.

Chinese migration and the spread of Buddhism cannot be understood in isolation, and each monk is treated as a case study to show different aspects of Buddhism in particular locations. These three cases offer a wide range of diversity by which to demonstrate the different aspects of South China Sea Buddhism, yet that diversity could probably be obtained by looking at almost any three monks in the Malay Archipelago. Nevertheless, all of them are aspects of the same history of Chinese migration and the same history of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia.

CHAPTER 1

Migrants, Monks, and Monasteries: Buddhism in the Malay Archipelago, 19th Century-1940s

The Malay Archipelago, the world's largest archipelago, is situated between the Indian Ocean, South China Sea, and the West Pacific. In his two-volume book *The Malay Archipelago* (1869), British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) presents an account of his travels through the southern part of the archipelago, including British Malaya, Singapore, and the Dutch East Indies. The book, subtitled "The Land of the Orang-Utan, and the Bird of Paradise. A Narrative of Travel, with Studies of Man and Nature," was based on his eight years of travel between 1854 and 1862. Wallace's seminal survey offers a comprehensive account of the geography, natural history, and people in island Southeast Asia. He also observed that Islam, which he called the "Mahometan religion," was the dominant religion in archipelago, but churches, "Hindoo temples," and "Chinese joss-houses" were present in many parts of the region.[1] Wallace's work illustrates the bio- and cultural diversity of the archipelago in the nineteenth century.

The Malay Archipelago sometimes referred to as maritime or insular Southeast Asia, in the present day consists of Muslim-majority Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, Catholic Philippines, and Chinese Buddhist-majority Singapore. In earlier times, this region saw the rise and fall of several Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, including the

[1] See Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago: The Land of the Orang-Utan, and the Bird of Paradise. A Narrative of Travel, with Studies of Man and Nature*, new ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890).

Srivijaya and Majapahit empires.[2] The arrival of Islam in the Malay Archipelago during the thirteenth century resulted in the large-scale conversion of the population to Islam.[3] Muslims in the maritime world of Southeast Asia sustained close ties to Arab centers of trade and pilgrimage across the Indian Ocean.[4] They were also connected to the port cities of Southern China across the South China Sea.[5] By the twentieth century, Islam is the religion of approximately 140 million people in Southeast Asia concentrated in the Malay Archipelago that stretches from southern Thailand, through Malaysia and Indonesia and north to the southern Philippines.[6] Indonesia, in fact, has the world's largest Muslim population. Singapore, on the other hand, has stood out as an anomaly in the maritime world of Southeast Asia for its Chinese and Buddhist majority population.

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[2] For studies on the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of early maritime Southeast Asia, see, for example, Daigorō Chihara, *Hindu-Buddhist Architecture in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Derek Thiam Soon Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy from the Tenth Through the Fourteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009); Michel Jacq-Hergoualc'h, *The Malay Peninsula: Crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road (100 BC-1300 AD)*, trans. Victoria Hobson (Leiden: Brill, 2002); O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Śrīvijaya in Malay History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).

[3] Peter G. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001); M. C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2006).

[4] Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[5] Geoff Wade, "Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China in the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century," in *Anthony Reid and the Study of the Southeast Asian Past*, eds. Geoff Wade and Li Tana (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 125-145.

[6] M. B. Hooker, "Introduction: The Translation of Islam in South-East Asia," in *Islam in South-East Asia*, ed. M. B. Hooker (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 1.

The three Buddhist monks discussed in this study spent a significant part of their careers in the maritime Southeast Asian states of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore in the second half of the twentieth century. Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia during modern times has little or nothing to do with the early Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms. The form of Buddhism that is most prominent in the Malay Archipelago is Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism which had its roots in China. In fact, Buddhists in the region are largely made up of ethnic Chinese who migrated to Southeast Asia or were born to their immigrant parents in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Unknown to many perhaps, a significant feature in the Chinese immigration to Southeast Asia was the development of South China Sea Buddhism by immigrant monks and laity. It is difficult to overemphasize the crucial importance of religion in every aspect of the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. In order to understand the historical forces that enabled Buddhism to spread to the Malay Archipelago, one must examine the history of Chinese immigration especially between the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. And in order to understand the advent of Buddhism and the spread of Buddhism modernism across the South China Sea, it is necessary to explore the roles of migrants, monks, and monasteries in the Malay Archipelago.

This chapter provides the historical background to Chinese migration and the spread of Buddhism to maritime Southeast Asia between the nineteenth century and the 1940s to set the stage for the discussion of the three monks in this study. It discusses Chinese migration to the colonial Southeast Asian states, arrival of Chinese Buddhism, and the South China Sea Buddhist networks that connected China and

Southeast Asia. During this time period, Buddhist monks came to the Malay Archipelago and propagated ideas of Buddhist modernism to the Chinese Buddhist communities. The chapter ends with the 1940s, the period which marked the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the evacuation of the Kuomintang government to Taiwan, as well as the beginning of decolonization in maritime Southeast Asia.

Map 3: The Southern Part of the Malay Archipelago.

Source: Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, preface.

China and the Chinese Diaspora

The Chinese were trading in the region that we now know as Southeast Asia as early as during the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD).[7] The Nanhai 南海 Trade, as Wang Gungwu coined it, was the ancient maritime trade between China and Southeast Asia across the vast body of water that we now call the South China Sea. The trading networks between China and Southeast Asia contributed to the circulation of precious items and luxurious goods, "holy objects" such as incense and sandal wood statues for religious worship, as well as medicines and spices from the Han to the Song dynasties prior to European trading presence in the region.[8] While China exported manufactures such as ceramics, silks, paper, and metal tools and utensils, it imported a variety of aromatic, medicines and spices from Southeast Asia.[9]

The Fujian 福建 and Guangdong 廣東 provinces, situated along the South China coast, were important ports for the South China Sea trade. These coastal provinces were also the "epicenter of emigration" to Southeast Asia.[10] The epicenter consisted of two physiographic macroregions, which according to G. William Skinner,

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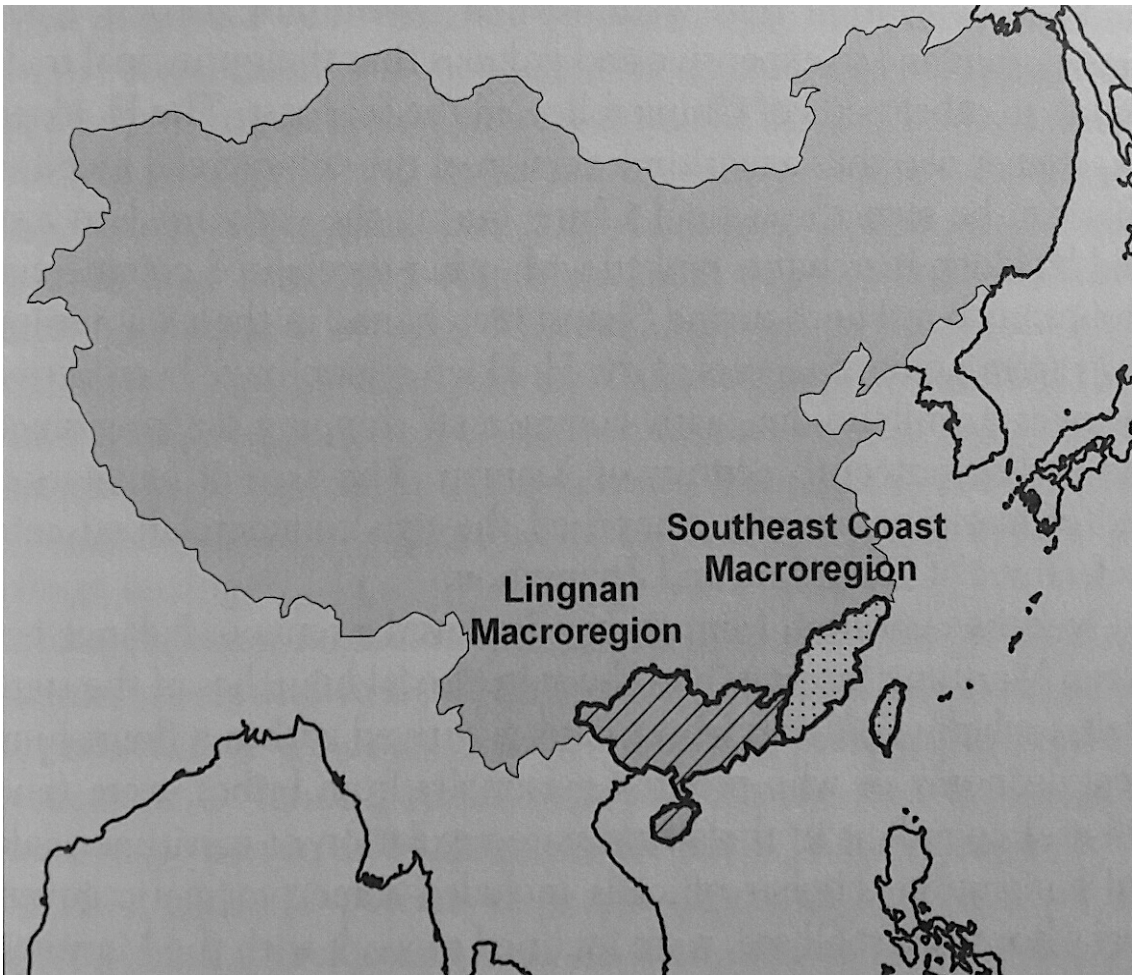
[7] Southeast Asia as a regional concept was only conceived during the Second World War. See Donald K. Emmerson, "Southeast Asia: What's in a Name?" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 15, 1 (March 1984): 7-9.
[8] Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade: Early Chinese Trade in the South China Sea* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003); see also Eric Tagliacozzo and Wen-chin Chang, eds., *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).
[9] Anthony Reid, "The Unthreatening Alternative: Chinese Shipping in Southeast Asia, 1567–1842," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 27 (1993): 13.
[10] Ibid., 28.

were the Lingnan and Southeast macroregions. The economics of macroregions were determined by transport of goods from the "periphery" usually via water through the river basins and centering in the commercialized "core" surrounded by plains and river deltas. The Lingnan macroregion was the drainage basin that included of the West, North, and East rivers, while the Southeast Coast consisted the basin of rivers that flowed from the Wuyi mountains (*Wuyi shan* 武夷山) into the sea.[11] Philip Kuhn has identified five commercialized core prefectures, which were geographic sources of emigrants within these two macroregions. Each of these commercialized cores had a river mouth or a seaport that connect to the South China Sea. The five dominant emigrant dialect populations in the five respective commercialized cores were (1) Wenzhou 溫州, the area near the mouth of Ou River (*Oujiang* 甌江) in the Wenzhou prefecture of Zhejiang 浙江 province; (2) Hokchiu, the area around the Min River (*Minjiang* 閩江) basin in Fuzhou 福州 prefecture that was served by the port of Fuzhou; (3) Hokkien, the region consists of the littoral prefectures of Quanzhou 泉州 and Zhangzhou 漳州 in Southern Fujian (*Minnan* 閩南) served by a succession of seaports, and by Xiamen 廈門 since the mid-seventeenth century;[12] (4) Teochew from the Chaozhou 潮州 prefecture in Guangdong province that was served by the seaport of Shantou 汕頭; and (5) Cantonese (Guangdongese) from the Pearl River Delta

[11] G. William Skinner, "Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China," in *The City in Late Imperial China*, ed. G William Skinner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 211-213.
[12] On the Xiamen trading networks, see Ng Chin-Keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983).

(*Zhujiang* 珠江), consisting parts of Guangzhou 廣州 and Zhaoqing 肇慶, served by the port of Guangzhou 廣州, and later, the British colonial entrepôt of Hong Kong beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.[13]



Map 4: The Two Macroregions of South China.

Source: Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 33.

[13] Philip A. Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 31-32.

The attraction of commercial and trading opportunities motivated Europeans to establish colonies in Southeast Asia beginning in the sixteenth century. In 1511, the Portuguese captured the Islamic kingdom of Malacca in order to gain control of the Southeast Asian spice trade, as well as the trade with China. Several decades later, the Portuguese gained a foothold in China's southern coastal port of Macao in the 1550s. Following the establishment of the Portuguese Malacca, Portuguese collaborated with Chinese traders and engaged them to serve as middlemen in the colonial trading port. As the Chinese population grew larger by the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese worked with them through a local Chinese *kapitan* (*jiabidan* 甲必丹), a wealthy and influential merchant in the migrant community.[14] A century later after the capture of Malacca, the Dutch East India Company founded Batavia (present-day Jakarta) in 1619. Chinese merchants who were working at the neighboring port kingdom of Banten had long been dealing in the spices trade with China were enticed to migrate to Batavia. They served the Dutch as contractors and tax farmers, recruited laborers and craftsmen from China, and supplied bricks and timber for buildings and city walls in the Dutch colonial port settlement.[15]

The British East India Company began to acquire territories in the Indian subcontinent during the mid-eighteenth century and emerged as a major power in Southeast Asian colonialism much later than the Portuguese and the Dutch. In 1789, Captain Francis Light established Penang to serve as an English trading emporium in

[14] Ibid., 58-59.
[15] Ibid., 60-61.

the Straits of Malacca, an area strategically located in the trade route between India and China. The early British settlers sought to attract the Chinese traders in the region to the newly established colony.[16] After three decades of competition and rivalry with the Dutch for control over the strategic Straits of Malacca, Britain colonized the island of Singapore in 1819, and later, acquired Malacca in exchange for Bencoolen from the Dutch in 1824. Besides attracting long established Chinese merchants from Malacca, the economic potential of Penang and Singapore attracted an increasing flow of Chinese immigrants from Fujian and Guangdong provinces of South China. This created an international nexus centered on Singapore, with branches in Malacca and Penang, which historian Philip Kuhn calls, a trading network based on "British naval power" and "Sino-British commercial energies."[17]

Despite the rise of European shipping in the South China Sea during the "age of commerce" between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the subsequent advert of colonialism in Southeast Asia, Anthony Reid highlights that there was still a larger tonnage of Chinese shipping than of European in the region as late as in the 1820s. The Chinese traders in Southeast Asia and Southern China played a crucial role in the shipping networks that connected Southeast Asia, Singapore, Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Xiamen prior to the Opium War and the signing of the Nanjing Treaty in

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[16] See Jean Elizabeth DeBernardi, *Rites of Belonging: Memory, Modernity, and Identity in a Malaysian Chinese Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), chapter 1.
[17] Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 100-101.

1842.[18] Early colonial authorities depended on the Chinese for three kinds of economic services, namely, trade with China, extract wealth from the Southeast Asian natives, and service the colonial cities. However, Chinese migration to Southeast Asia was sporadic and occurred in smaller number before the Opium War. Most Chinese traders were sojourners and did not intend to settle permanently in Southeast Asia. They were not empire builders on their own, but pragmatic collaborators in the empires of European colonizers.[19]

Large scale Chinese emigration began in the mid-nineteenth century and lasted through the 1930s. This massive movement of the Chinese population could be attributed to both the push factors within China, as well as the pull factors in Southeast Asia. Qing China's defeat in the Opium War and the subsequent signing of unequal treaties had two significant consequences on Chinese emigration to Southeast Asia. First, the Western domination of China's treaty ports and the military supremacy of the imperial powers provided the "legal framework" for the recruitment and transportation of Chinese laborers. Additionally, the war and opium trade significantly disrupted the Chinese society in the Southern coastal provinces. A large number of the Chinese population were displaced from their livelihood and suffered from massive impoverishment and social disorganization. Hence, colonialism in Southeast Asia coupled with the "opening of China" by the Western powers created the mechanisms

[18] Reid, "The Unthreatening Alternative," 13-14.
[19] Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 64-65.

for moving Chinese labor from China to Southeast Asia.[20] On the other hand, numerous socio-political problems within China, including famines, natural disasters, population pressure, and rebellions, also motivated the Chinese to leave their homeland in order to seek better opportunities in Southeast Asia.[21]

Mass Chinese migration to Malaya and Singapore began in the mid-nineteenth century, and especially following the British "Forward Movement" policy from 1874. The British colonial authorities recruited large number of Chinese from the coastal provinces to work in the tin mines and rubber plantations on the Malay Peninsular. More than 100,000 Chinese migrants flooded into Malaya annually through most of period between 1882 and 1932, making the Chinese the dominant ethnic group in Malaya's west coast states. For instance, the Chinese population in Perak had increased to 90,000 by 1897, almost even with the native Malays.[22] The British Straits Settlement of Penang and Singapore also saw an influx of Chinese migrants during the mid-nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries.[23] In Penang, Chinese migrants found employment opportunities in the sugar plantation, as well as in the docks, shops, and crafts in the main settlement of Georgetown on the island. Singapore because of its strategic location was fast becoming a major port city for global trade. Chinese found job opportunities in the port, gambier and pepper

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[20] Ibid., 111.
[21] Yen Ching-hwang, *A Social History of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya, 1800-1911* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), 1-3
[22] Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 148.
[23] The Straits Settlement consisted of Malacca, Penang, and Singapore.

plantations, and in commercial, craft, manual, and service work in the growing city.[24] According to the 1881 Straits Settlement colonial census, there were 86,766 Chinese in the British settlements of Malacca, Penang, and Singapore. The census reveals that the majority dialect groups were Hokkien, Teochew, and Cantonese.[25] By 1901, Penang had 97,000 Chinese out of a total population of 244,000, and Singapore, which by then already had a Chinese majority population, counted 165,000 out of a total of 230,000.[26]

Chinese were engaged in occupations such as traders and artisans in Dutch Java since the first half of the nineteenth century. According to the colonial census of 1844, there were 108,275 Chinese in Java. Batavia had the large Chinese population of 31,764, followed by Surabaya (11,680) and Semarang (9,579). The Chinese population in Java continued to grow steadily throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1905, there were 92,520 Chinese residing in Batavia, 26,646 in Surabaya, and 23,723 in Semarang.[27] Many thousands of Chinese also found their way to the outer islands of the Dutch East Indies. They sought job opportunities in the tin mines of Banka and Belitung and in tobacco and rubber plantations in Sumatra.[28] According to the colonial census of 1920, there were 384,218 Chinese residing in Java

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[24] Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 148.
[25] Maurice Freedman, *The Study of Chinese Society: Essays by Maurice Freedman; selected and introduced by G. William Skinner* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 62.
[26] Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 148.
[27] Mona Lohanda, *Growing Pains: The Chinese and the Dutch in Colonial Java, 1890-1942* (Jakarta: Yayasan Cipta Loka Caraka, 2002), 16-17.
[28] Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 146-147.

and 425,429 in the outer islands with the biggest concentration in the east coast of Sumatra, West Kalimantan, and the Bangka Island.[29] Scholars of Indonesia have suggested that there were two groups of Chinese in the Dutch East Indies, namely, the peranakan Chinese, who were local born and speak Bahasa Indonesia or one of the local languages, and the totok Chinese who were the China-born recent migrants.[30] The census of 1930 reveals that 63.5% of the 11,190,014 Chinese living in the Dutch East Indies were local born peranakans.[31] While majority of the Chinese population in Java were peranakans, most of the totoks resided in the outer islands, and engaged in banking, industry, and trade.[32]

Having considered the background and processes of Chinese migration to Southeast Asia, the remainder of this chapter discusses the role of the Chinese diaspora in the dissemination of Buddhism, and Chinese religions in general, across the South China Sea. The central issues are how Chinese continued their religious practices in maritime Southeast Asia, and how the Chinese diasporic networks contributed to the transregional circulation of people, ideas, and resources between China and Southeast Asia.

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[29] Lohanda, *Growing Pains*, 17.
[30] Chinese in the East Indies/Indonesia were categorized into "peranakan" and "totok." Chinese born in the Indies/Indonesia was considered "peranakan" and Chinese born in China was considered "totok." The two terms were used to distinguish native-born Chinese from the new Chinese migrants. See G. William Skinner, "The Chinese Minority," in *Indonesia*, ed. Ruth T. McVey (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1963), 97-117; Leo Suryadinata, *The Culture of the Chinese Minority in Indonesia* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1997), chapter 1; Mely G. Tan, *Etnis Tionghoa di Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008), chapter 7.
[31] Lohanda, *Growing Pains*, 17.
[32] Lohanda, *Growing Pains* 17; Suryadinata, *Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, 9.

Buddhas and Gods across the South China Sea

The arrival and settlement of Chinese migrants contributed to the spread of Chinese Buddhism into the Malay Archipelago. As early as the seventeenth century, the Hokkien merchants in Malacca established the Blue Clouds Pavilion (*Qingyun ting* 青雲亭) in 1673 to worship the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (or better known as *Guanyin pusa* 觀音菩薩), the Bodhisattva of Compassion.[33] The temple, which was originally named Guanyin Pavilion (*Guanyin ting* 觀音亭) after the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, was renamed Blue Clouds (*Qingyun* 青雲), a metaphor for high officials, suggesting that the Chinese *kapitans* who held office within the temple were akin to the scholar-officials in the homeland.[34] The temple served many social needs of the Chinese migrant community. It was a place of worship, a ritual center of the Chinese community, and a shared space for ancestral sacrifice, preserving the ancestral tablets of the deceased migrants. Later, the temple offered charitable assistance and education to the overseas Chinese community in Malacca. [35] An inscription erected in 1801 to commemorate the reconstruction of the Blue Clouds Pavilion presents the motivations

[33] Guanyin is a popular deity in China and among the overseas Chinese. On the cult of Guanyin, see Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-Yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
[34] For a history of the Blue Clouds Pavilion, see Zeng Yansheng 曾衍盛, *Qingyun ting ge'an yanjiu: Malaixiya zui gulao miao yu* 青雲亭個案研究 : 馬來西亞最古老廟宇 (Malacca: Loh Printing Press (M) Sdn. Bhd., 2011); Wolfgang Franke and Chen Tieh Fan, eds., *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia,* volume 1 (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1982), 223.
[35] Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 67-69.

behind the construction of the temple, as well as the form of Buddhism adhered by the Chinese migrants:

> Why was this Blue Clouds Pavilion built? We merchants carry goods around for sale, not afraid to ford the streams and cross the oceans to travel to this land, striving to emulate Tao 陶 [Zhu 朱] and Yi 猗 [Dun 頓].[36] This indeed shows our lofty ambition. [On our way here] we relied on auspicious omens that streams and oceans were calm and peaceful. The reason why divination showed that it would further one's fortunes to cross the great water was because Gods and Buddhas (*shenfo* 神佛) have blessed us. This is just why this temple was built. Its construction is to manifest the Buddha's blessing (*fozhiling* 佛之靈); its name is to rouse people's ambition. To amass a fortune through trade has been a longstanding practice since ancient times. Those who acquire wealth should have lofty ambitions. Their high aspirations are like the Blue Clouds finding their way [to the skies]. Making profit should not be insufficient for making [an honorable] name. Therefore we placed a plaque on the temple inscribed with "Blue Clouds Pavilion."[37]

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[36] Tao Zhu and Yi Dun were famous wealthy merchants in ancient China.
[37] "Chongxing qingyun ting beiji 重興青雲亭碑記," cited in Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 67-68. The inscription can be found in Franke and Chen, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, volume 1, 237-238.

This inscription reveals several interesting insights about the form of Chinese Buddhism that Chinese migrants brought to the Malay Archipelago. First of all, Chinese merchants, not Buddhist monks, were responsible for bringing Buddhism to Malacca and running the temple in the host country prior to the last decade of the nineteenth century. In fact, the leadership committee of Blue Clouds Pavilion served the colonial government as port customs collectors, one of whom was the *kapitan* leading the Chinese community. Leadership of the Chinese community was closely identified with the temple's leadership committee such that the title "pavilion head" (*tingzhu* 亭主) was used to designate the leader of the Chinese community even after the British authorities abolished the *kapitan* system in 1826.[38] Furthermore, the Chinese migrants were more concerned with praying for blessings and wealth, rather than in learning the Buddhist doctrines. The mention of "gods and Buddhas" in the inscription suggests that the Chinese migrants worshipped the Buddha and Bodhisattvas along with various Chinese gods. In fact, many Chinese migrants venerated the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, along with Taoist deities, and practiced the Confucian ritual of ancestor worship. This form of pre-institutional Chinese Buddhism, as some scholars called it, an "unity of the three teachings" (*sanjiao heyi* 三教合一) of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism (*Ru shi dao* 儒釋道).[39]

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[38] Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others*, 69.

[39] Shi Chuanfa 釋傳發, *Xinjiapo Fojiao fazhan shi* 新加坡佛教發展史 (Singapore: Xinjiapo fojiao jushilin, 1997), 44-45; Chen Qiuping 陳秋平, *Yimin yu fojiao: Ying zhimin shidai de bingcheng fojiao* 移民與佛教: 英殖民時代的檳城佛教 (Johor: Nanfang xueyuan 2004), 130, 145.

Figure 1.1: The Blue Clouds Pavilion in Present-day Malacca. Photo by author.

The Chinese who migrated to Java had founded seven temples between the seventeenth and early nineteenth century, namely, Kim Tek Ie (*Jinde yuan* 金德院, also known as Vihāra Dharma Bhakti) in Jakarta, Tiao Kak Sie (*Chaojue si* 潮覺寺, also known as Vihāra Dewi Welas Asih) in Cirebon, Tay Kak Sie (*Dajue si* 大覺寺) in Semarang, Tien Kok Sie (*Zhenguo si* 鎮國寺) in Surakarta, Boen Tek Bio (*Wende miao* 文德廟) in Tangerang, Ban Tek Ie (*Wande yuan* 萬德院, also known as Vihāra

Avalokiteśvara) in Banten, and Tjoe Tak Bio (*Cize miao* 慈澤廟) in Juana.[40] Kim Tek Ie, the oldest Buddhist temple in Indonesia, was founded in 1650 in Glodok, a Chinese district in the southwest of Batavia. Although there is no inscription commemorating its establishment, it is believed to be the oldest Buddhist temple still in existence in Indonesia. The temple was established under the initiative of Lieutenant (*leizhenlan* 雷珍蘭) Guo Xunguan 郭訓官 and was completed in 1669, during the tenure of *kapitan* Guo Junguan 郭郡管. Similar to the Blue Clouds Pavilion, Kim Tek Ie's original name was Guanyin Pavilion, a very common name for Chinese temples named after the Avalokiteśvara. In 1755, the *kapitan* Oei Tsilauw (Huang Shilao 黃鈰老) changed the name of the temple to "Jinde yuan," meaning "Temple of Golden Virtues." The temple was constructed for the veneration of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and was said to be a residence for Buddhist monks since the seventeenth century. According Dutch naturalist, François Valentijn, there were eighteen monks residing in the temple at the beginning of the eighteen century. However, little is known about the identity of these monks and their religious activities in Batavia.[41] From the temple inscriptions, it appears that the *kapitan* and his Chinese community leaders were behind the

[40] Wolfgang Franke, Claudine Salmon, and Anthony K. K. Siu, eds., *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia*, volume 2 part 1 (Singapore: South Seas Society, 1997), xix.
[41] Claudine Salmon and Denys Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta: Temples et ́vie Collective* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1977), xviii; Franke, Salmon, and Siu, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia*, volume 1, xliv, 5.

management and funding of the temple, while monks were likely to be hired ritual specialists.[42]

Concomitantly, the Chinese migrants were active agents in the spread of numerous Chinese deity cults into Southeast Asia. Many Chinese migrants brought along some incense ashes from temples in China or a statue of their patron deity with them for blessing and protection as they ventured south to the Malay Archipelago. The deities of such local cults were "represented in human form, housed in temples, credited with a wide range of powers to influence local affairs, and paraded through the community periodically to ensure their protection."[43] The overseas Chinese communities worshipped these deities for a variety of reasons, including good health, longevity, fertility, marriage, wealth, promotion, luck in examinations, and protection. For many migrants, the long journey to foreign lands filled them with a deep sense of anxiety and uncertainty. Therefore, religious beliefs and practices not only fulfilled the spiritual needs of the migrants, but also significantly enhanced their confidence and gave them a greater sense of security in their new work environment in colonial Southeast Asia.[44]

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[42] See "Changxiu Jinde yuan, Mingcheng shuyuan qiandaolu beiji ji lejuan mingming 倡修金德院、明誠書院前道路碑記及樂捐名銘," in Franke, Salmon, and Siu, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia*, 11-13.
[43] Michael Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 174.
[44] Cheng Lim Keak, "Chinese Deities, Emigration and Social Structure in Singapore," *Asian Culture* 21 (June 1997): 39.

Chinese migrants brought many Chinese deities from China to Southeast Asia, and contributed to temple building in their host countries. The "Empress of Heaven" (Tianhou 天后, also known as Mazu 媽祖), was probably the most popular goddess in the Chinese diaspora. Commonly regarded as the protector of seafarers, Tianhou temples could be found all along the Southeast China coast from Zhejiang to Guangdong and on the island of Taiwan.[45] After surviving a long and risky voyage to Southeast Asia, many Chinese migrants paid their gratitude to Tianhou for her protection, and prayed for safety and economic success in their new host country. The sea goddess was worshipped across the various dialect groups including Cantonese, Hainanese, Hokkien, and Teochew. At the same time, local native place deities (*xiangtu shen* 鄉土神) that were peculiar and significant to specific dialects groups and locales also accompanied the Chinese migrants to Southeast Asia. Among these gods were Guandi 關帝, the Chinese god of war, a favorite deity among the Cantonese and Hakka community; Kaizhang Shengwang 開漳聖王, the protector of Zhangzhou 漳州 people; Qingshui Zushi 清水祖師, a popular Buddho-Daoist deity among the Anxi 安溪 community; Shenghou Enzhu 聖候恩主, the patron god of Jinmen 金門

[45] The cult of Tianhou has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention. See, for instance, James L. Watson, "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ("Empress of Heaven") Along the South China Coast, 960-1960," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 292-324; P. Steven Sangren, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

migrants; and Xuantian Shangdi 玄天上帝, a deified Polaris and god of navigation, popular among the Teochew community.[46]

Jonas Daniel Vaughan, a British colonial official and lawyer in Singapore, made several interesting observations on Buddhism and Chinese popular religion in his 1879 book *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements*. During his visit to the Thian Hock Keng (*Tianfu gong* 天福宮) in Singapore, a temple of Mazu established by the Hokkien community in 1839, Vaughan noticed that Mazu was worshipped along with Guandi and Baosheng Dadi 保生大帝 in the main temple shrine, and the Buddha and Bodhisattvas in a smaller shrine at the rear of the temple. The Chinese devotees would light candles and incense sticks to pay obeisance to all deities in the temples. He pointed out that the Śākyamuni Buddha statue was draped in a "blue satin cloak" and a "Chinese skull cap" was placed on the head of the image. Vaughan noted three other figures placed behind the Buddha image, and one of which, was the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (*Qianshou Guanyin* 千手觀音), which he mistaken as the Hindu goddess Durga. He also noticed that there were six Buddhist monks residing at the temple.[47] More interestingly, Vaughan recorded his observation of the morning and evening rituals and his conversations with the resident monks:

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[46] Cheng, "Chinese Deities, Emigration and Social Structure," 39, 42-43; Yen, *Chinese in Singapore and Malaya*, 14-15.
[47] Jonas Daniel Vaughan, *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements* (Singapore: The Mission Press, 1879), 51-52.

At four o'clock in the morning and again at four in the afternoon, service is conducted in the Buddhist temple. The priests are closely shaven and with one or two exceptions are intelligent looking men. They have enough to live on and are allowed a cook to provide their daily meals. As the bell strikes four, one of the priests dressed himself first in a white surplice, and over that he wears a long grey coat. He then lights two lamps before Buddha, and takes a short rolling pin in each hand, opens a book written in Chinese characters and commences to chant in Gregorian tones very slowly, raising and lowering his voice from time to time melodiously enough and striking at certain pauses, first with the stick in his right hand on a hollow tortoise shaped piece of wood; and then with his left hand on a clear sounding metal bell.[48] Occasionally striking with both hands at the same time. This performance on the bell and tortoise is probably to keep the god wide awake. The chanting gets faster and faster as the priest goes on. The Chinese who had assembled in curiosity, and those who accompanied the writer were certainly unimpressed by the ceremony. One man learned in Chinese classics, who spoke Malay fluently told the writer that, he did not understand a word that the priest was saying, and he was sure the priests were as ignorant themselves. We asked a priest if he understood the books; he said no, that it was a sacred and mysterious

[48] The tortoise shaped piece of wood was likely to be a wooden fish (*muyu* 木魚) and the metal bell was probably a singing bowl (*qing* 磬).

> language understood only by the gods. The Baba read a page of the book aloud, the words were Chinese it is true, but conveyed no meaning to the reader's mind nor to the minds of those who were listening. The priests said the books had been brought from China.[49]

Several conclusions can be made about Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia by the nineteenth century in the light of Jonas Daniel Vaughan's candid observation. First, Buddhist deities were worshipped in Chinese temples and vice versa. The overseas Chinese did not differentiate Buddhist deities from Chinese local gods, and venerated these sacred images by lighting candles and incense sticks. Second, Chinese Buddhist monks resided and performed religious ceremonies in Chinese temples. They brought their ritual knowledge, liturgical music instruments, and Chinese scriptures across the South China Sea. The Buddhist ceremonies that Vaughan described were rather similar to rituals that scholars observed in the Fujian province during the nineteenth century.[50] Third, Chinese migrant monks did not understand the meaning and significance of the Buddhist scriptures. One of my informants explained that early migrant monks who went to Southeast Asia during that time were less educated, and therefore, could barely understand the scriptures written in classical Chinese. Most of them were trained as ritual specialists to perform rituals in temples or at funerals.[51]

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[49] Vaughan, *Chinese of the Straits Settlements*, 53-54.
[50] See, for instance, J. M. M. De Groot, *Buddhist Masses for the Dead at Amoy* (Leyde: E. J. Brill, 1884); Vaughan, *Chinese of the Straits Settlements*, 54-55.
[51] Shi Chi Chern, interview by author, Penang, September 29, 2014.

Therefore, early migrant monks neither had the knowledge nor intention to teach the Buddhist doctrines in the Chinese temples.

Figure 1.2: Chinese Monks Performing Funeral Rites in Singapore, circa 19th Century. Photo Courtesy of Shi Kaidi.

The Beginning of Institutional Buddhism

The institutional form of Chinese Buddhism only appeared in maritime Southeast Asia during the last decade of the nineteenth century. By institutional Buddhism, I refer to Buddhism as an organized religion with its system of teachings,

rituals, clerics, and organizations.[52] The arrival of educated Chinese monks in the Malay Archipelago contributed to the emergence of institutional Buddhism and the subsequent monastery building efforts among the overseas Chinese communities. The first Buddhist monastery to be constructed was the Kek Lok Si (*Jile si* 極樂寺) in Penang. The founding of the Kek Lok Si was a result of a combination of colonial interference in Chinese temple affairs and the arrival of a migrant monk.

The founding of Kek Lok Si can be traced back to the Kong Hock Keong Temple (*Guangfu gong* 廣福宮) in Penang. Kong Hock Keong Temple, also known as the Guanyin Pavilion, was established in 1800 by both the Cantonese and Hokkien migrant communities. Like the Blue Clouds Pavilion in Malacca and the Kim Tek Ie in Batavia discussed earlier, the Kong Hock Keong Temple was built to venerate the Avalokiteśvara in Penang and housed several monks.[53] In 1887, the British colonial government responded to complaints that the monks at Kong Hock Keong Temple were engaging in unmonastic behavior. The colonial authorities appointed new directors and gave them the power to appoint and fire monks. The new board of trustees which consisted of a justice of peace, a state councilor, the head of the Khoo (*qiu* 邱) clan, and a wealthy merchant, fired the unruly monks and sought a senior monk to assume the abbacy of the temple. They invited Venerable Beow Lean

[52] I borrow the concept of "institutional religion" from the work of C. K. Yang, *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

[53] For a brief history of the Kong Hock Keong Temple, see Wolfgang Franke and Chen Tieh Fan, eds., *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia,* volume 2 (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1985), 526-535.

(Miaolian 妙蓮, 1824-1907) from Fuzhou, who was in Penang raising funds to renovate his monastery in China, to become the abbot of Kong Hock Keong.[54]

Beow Lean was ordained and received his monastic training at the renowned Drum Mountain Yongquan Monastery (*Gushan yongquan si* 鼓山湧泉寺) in Fuzhou. He later became the abbot of the monastery and renowned Dharma teacher in South China.[55] In 1875, Beow Lean ventured abroad to Taiwan and Southeast Asia in order to raise funds for the renovation of Yongquan Monastery. His fund raising campaign allowed him to establish ties with the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and earned him a reputation as a learned monk. In 1888, when he returned to Penang to fundraise for his monastery in Fuzhou, Kong Hock Keong's trustee board, consisting of prominent overseas Chinese leaders, requested him to become the abbot, which he agreed.[56]

Beow Lean's tenure at Kong Hock Keong, however, did not last long. After becoming the abbot of the temple located in the busy George Town, he found the place too noisy and inconducive for spiritual cultivation. Additionally, he was concerned with the quality, or the lack of it, of the monastics in Malaya. For these reasons, Beow Lean decided to establish a Buddhist monastery in Penang to teach the

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[54] DeBernardi, *Rites of Belonging*, 32.

[55] On Drum Mountain Yongquan Monastery, see Hsuan-Li Wang, "Gushan: the Formation of a Chan Lineage During the Seventeenth Century and Its Spread to Taiwan" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2014).

[56] For a biography of Beow Lean, see Shi Kaidi 釋開諦, *Nanyou yunshui qing: Fojiao dade honghua xingma jishi (1888-2005)* 南游雲水情: 佛教大德弘化星馬記事 (1888-2005) (Penang: Poh Oo Tong Temple, 2010), 70-73.

Dharma to the overseas Chinese community and as a place of cultivation for migrant monks. In 1891, he sought and found a hilly plot of land known as Crane Mountain (*Heshan* 鶴山) in Air Itam (also spelt as Ayer Itam) to build his monastery. With the support of five wealthy Chinese businessmen, namely, Cheong Fatt Tze (Zhang Bishi 張弼士), Chang Yunan (Zhang Yunan 張煜南),[57] Hsieh Yung-kuan (Xie Rongguang 謝榮光),[58] Chung Keng Quee (Zheng Jinggui 鄭景貴),[59] and Tye Kee Yoon (Dai Xiyun 戴喜雲),[60] Beow Lean constructed the Kek Lok Si, which means "Highest Happiness" (*Sukhāvatī*), the name of the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha, as a branch temple of the Yongquan Monastery in Fuzhou. Upon its completion, the monastery became the largest Chinese Buddhist monastery in Southeast Asia.[61]

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[57] Chang Yünan is also known as Tjong Yong Hian (Zhang Rongxuan 張榕軒) in the Dutch East Indies.

[58] Hsieh Yung-kuan is also known as Cheah Meng Chi (Xie Mengchi 謝夢池)

[59] The British authorities appointed Chung Keng Quee as the kapitan of Taiping in Perak. He made a fortune from the tin mining industry.

[60] Tye Kee Yoon is also known as Dai Chunrong 戴春榮.

[61] For a history of Kek Lok Si, see *Heshan Jile si zhi* 鶴山極樂寺志 (Binlangyu, 1923); Choon San Wong, *Kek Lok Si: Temple of Paradise* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963); Franke and Chen, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, 626-667; Chen, *Yimin yu fojiao*; Shi, *Nanyou yunshui qing*, 71-72.

Figure 1.3: Kek Lok Si in Present-day Penang. Photo by author.

Following the establishment of a new monastery, Beow Lean played a proactive role in propagating the Dharma in Penang. In 1904, he wrote to the Qing court in China to request for a set of Tripiṭaka for his monastery. According to a stone inscription with a text of a telegram from the Office from the Supervision of the Sangha (*Qinming guanli senglu si* 欽命管理僧錄司), his request was approved by the upon the imperial order of the Imperial Household Department (Neiwu *fu* 內務府). The Qing court bestowed the Kek Lok Si with a set of Qianlong edition of the Tripiṭaka (*Longzang jing* 隆藏經) for "worship, lecture, widespread conversion, and

distribution" (*gongfeng yanshuo, puhua liutong* 供奉演說, 普化流通). They also awarded the abbot, Beow Lean, with imperial purple robes, an alms bowl, and a monastic staff (*khakkhara*) for "protecting the state and blessing the people" (*huguo youmin* 護國佑民).[62] The gifts from the Qing court to Kek Lok Si and its abbot demonstrates the imperial recognition of the monastery as an overseas branch of the Yongquan Monastery. Furthermore, it reflects the imperial recognition of the endeavor of the overseas Chinese monks to spread Buddhist teachings abroad.

A year later, Beow Lean retired and handed the abbacy of the monastery to his precept-disciple, Venerable Benzhong (本忠, 1866-1936), who was ordained and trained at the Yongquan Monastery in Fuzhou. In 1888, he accompanied Beow Lean to Penang, and later, served as the superintendent (*jianyuan* 監院) of the monastery. After becoming the abbot of Kek Lok Si, Benzhong actively promoted the method of recitation of the Buddha's name (*nianfo famen* 念佛法門). He founded a Buddha's Name Recitation Association (*Nianfo lianshe* 念佛蓮社) within the Kek Lok Si to encourage the recitation of the Buddha's name and propagated the Pure Land (*jingtu* 淨土) teachings among the overseas Chinese in Penang.[63] As Kek Lok Si was located in a hilly and less accessible area, Benzhong established the Kuan Im See (*Guanyin si* 觀音寺) as a branch of Kek Lok Si in 1922, to spread Pure Land Buddhism to the

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[62] "Qinming guanli senglu si dianwen bei 欽命管理僧錄司電文碑," in Franke and Chen, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, 646-648.

[63] On Pure Land Buddhism, see, for instance, Luis O Gómez, *Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light: Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutras* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996).

Chinese community in the city area.[64] The establishment of Kek Lok Si and Kuan Im See marked the rise of institutional Buddhism in Penang. For the first time in maritime Southeast Asia, Buddhist monks, rather than businessmen and merchants, were the ones establishing temples in the Chinese diaspora. Moreover, unlike their predecessors who were primarily ritual specialist, these monks received their monastic training in China and were concerned with the propagation of Buddhist doctrines to the overseas Chinese.

Similar trends can be observed in British Singapore and in the Dutch East Indies. In 1898, Venerable Xianhui 賢慧, with the invitation and support of wealthy businessman Low Kim Pong (Liu Jinbang 劉金榜, 1838-1909), established the Lotus Hill Siong Lim Monastery (*Lianshan Shuanglin si* 連山雙林寺), the first Chinese Buddhist monastery in Singapore.[65] Low Kim Pong, a Chinese immigrant from Fujian who came to Singapore in 1858, emerged from rags to riches to become a wealthy businessman and influential leader in the Chinese community. He was a founding director of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Xinjiapo zhonghua zongshang hui* 新加坡中華總商會) and a board member of the Singapore Hokkien Association (*Xinjiapo Fujian huiguan* 新加坡福建會館).[66] A popular legend

[64] Shi, *Nanyou yunshui qing*, 79,
[65] For a history of the Siong Lim Monastery, see *Lianshan shuanglin si* 蓮山雙林寺 (Singapore: Xinjiapo lianshan shuanglin si, 2001), 12-15; Chan Chow Wah, *Light on the Lotus Hill: Shuang Lin Monastery and the Burma Road* (Singapore: Khoon Chee Vihara, 2009).
[66] Ke Mulin 柯木林, *Xinhua lishi renwu liezhuan* 新華歷史人物列傳 (Singapore: Jiaoyu chuban siying youxian gongsi, 1995), 24.

has it that the businessman and his son both dreamt of a holy man radiating golden light and arriving in Singapore from the west. Soon after receiving this omen, the father and son met an entourage of twelve Buddhist monastics led by Venerable Xianhui that stopped in Singapore en route to China after a six-year pilgrimage to Burma, Ceylon, and India. Low Kim Pong invited the entourage of monastic to stay in Singapore and asked Xianhui to serve as the abbot of the new monastery he planned to build. Xianhui, with the help of Low, obtained a plot of land at Kim Keat Road, and raised funds to construct the Siong Lim Monastery as a branch monastery of Xichan Monastery (*Xichan si* 西禪寺) in Fuzhou. It was a massive project that took eleven years and cost $50,000, a large amount of money at that time.[67]

According to an inscription erected in 1920 to commemorate the construction of Siong Lim Monastery, Singapore did not originally have a Buddhist monastery, and the Siong Lim Monastery was the first to be built. It started from the altruistic intentions of Low Kim Pong, who offered land and donated gold, and requested Chan Master Xianhui from Mount Songyi (*Songyi shan* 宋怡山) Lineage of the Linji 臨濟 school of Chan Buddhism to establish the monastery. Xianhui recruited Xinghui 性慧 as his disciple and taught Chan meditation. Thereafter, faithful devotees around the Singapore island, such as Yan 顏, Qiu 邱, Chen 陳, Lin 林, and others, as well as

[67] *Lianshan shuanglin si*, 12-15; Chan, *Light on the Lotus Hill*,

Ceylonese traders donated generously to support the construction of the monastery.[68] Anne Blackburn points out that Xianhui's travels in Burma, Ceylon, and India can be understood in the context of transnational religious journeys to seek access to the Indic Buddhist world during the nineteenth century. Xianhui, like several Chinese and Japanese monks of his time, made pilgrimages to the sacred sites associated with the historical Śākyamuni Buddha.[69] For this reason, Blackburn suggests that the Siong Lim Monastery established under Xianhui's abbacy promoted a Buddhism that was devotionally and ritually acceptable by both Chinese and Pāli-using southern Asia Buddhist diaspora in Singapore. By 1904, Siong Lim Monastery was not only the center for Chinese Buddhism in Singapore, but also a religious space involving Chinese and Sinhalese Buddhists.[70] The Siong Lim Monastery was a clear departure from the earlier Chinese temples, and marked the beginning of institutional Buddhism in Singapore.

In the case of the Dutch East Indies, Venerable Pen Ching (Benqing 本清, 1878-1962), also known as Mahasthavisa Ayramula, was considered by Indonesian Buddhists as the first Chinese monk to spread the Dharma in colonial Java. He was regarded as a "Mahābhikṣu" (*Da biqiu* 大比丘 or *Da heshang* 大和尚) by his

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[68] "Mujian lianshan shuanglin chansi beiji 募建蓮山雙林禪寺碑記," in *Xinjiapo huawen beiming jilu* 新加坡華文碑銘集錄, eds. Chen Jinghe 陳荊和 and Chen Yusong 陳育崧(Xianggang: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue, 1970), 157-158.
[69] See Richard M. Jaffe, "Seeking Śākyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 30, 1 (Winter 2004): 65-96.
[70] Anne Blackburn, "Ceylonese Buddhism in Colonial Singapore: New Ritual Spaces & Specialists, 1895-1935," *Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series* 184 (May 2012): 6-8.

followers, and later, became the ordination teacher of Ashin Jinarakkhita, whom I will discuss in Chapter 4.[71] Pen Ching was born in 1878 in the Fujian province of China. Since childhood, he became a vegetarian and learned about the Buddha's teachings from history and literature books. At the age of 19, he became a novice at the Putian South Mountain Guanghua Monastery (*Putian Nanshan Guanghua si* 莆田南山廣化寺) under the tutelage of Master Thung Chan (Tongzhan 通湛). The following year, he received his higher ordination. In 1901 at the age of 23, Pen Ching traveled south to the East Indies for the first time to propagate the Dharma. Unlike his counterparts in Penang and Singapore, he did not have intention to establish a monastery in the Indies. Rather, he resided at the Tay Kak Sie Temple (*Dajue si* 大覺寺), an eighteenth century Chinese temple located in Semarang, Central Java, to teach the Dharma. As my informant explained, Pen Ching like many Chinese migrant monks of his time, were sojourners and had no intention to settle permanently in the Dutch East Indies. Pen Ching probably planned to propagate the Dharma in Southeast Asia, and eventually, return to retire in his ancestral monastery in Putian.[72]

Tay Kak Sie was constructed by the Chinese community to venerate Guanyin, but the temple also worshipped the Buddha, Tianhou, Baoshang Dadi, as well as a wide range of local Chinese deities.[73] As pointed out earlier, Semarang had the third largest Chinese population in Java, after Batavia and Surabaya. The presence of a

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[71] "Mahabhikṣu" is an honorific given to monks of virtue and old age.
[72] Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.
[73] On Tay Kak Sie Temple, see "Dajue si 大覺寺," in Franke, Salmon, and Siu, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials*, 363-378.

sizeable Chinese population was probably a motivation for Pen Ching's missionary endeavor in the colonial port city. He taught in Semarang for three years before returning to China. When Pen Ching was back in China, he was nominated to become the abbot of the Putian Nanshan Guanghua Monastery, as he was the most senior monk according to the lineage genealogy of Guanghua Monastery. However, he rejected the invitation and went back to the East Indies a year later.[74]

When Pen Ching went to Java for the second time, he stayed in Hiap Thian Kiong Temple (*Xietian gong* 協天宮), a Chinese temple in Bandung, West Java. Founded in 1885, Hiap Thian Kiong temple was a Chinese temple dedicated to Guandi, the Chinese god of war.[75] He taught there for four years until the arrival of his Dharma brother, Venerable Pen Ru (Benru 本如), from Putian. He then handled the temple to Pen Ru and left for Cirebon, a port city on the northern coast of Java. Shortly after, Pen Ching went to Karawang and stayed at the Kuan Ti Bio (*Guandi miao* 關帝廟). He expanded the Chinese temple, making it into a popular place of worship among the Chinese community. After spending two years at the Kuan Ti Bio, he left the temple to become a wandering monk. In 1926, Pen Ching arrived in Jakarta and resided in a small hut (*kuti*) in the yard of a small Buddhist shrine, known as the Jade Lotus Hall (*Yulian tang* 玉蓮堂), in Petak Sinkian, West Jakarta. When the shrine was relocated to another place, the ownership of the land was transferred to Pen

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[74] *Untukmu Mahasthavira: Panitia Peringatan Hari Ulang Tahun Ke-68 dan 38 Tahun Pengabdian Y.A. Mahasthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita* (Jakarta, 1990), 29.
[75] On Hiap Thian Kiong Temple, see "Xietian gong 協天宮," in Franke, Salmon, and Siu, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials*, 130-147.

Ching in 1949. By then, the Chinese Civil War with the impending Communist victory meant that Pen Ching could not return to Putian. Thus, he decided to settle in Jakarta and build a monastery. Pen Ching with the assistance of his two disciples, Tipan 體盤 and Yuanren 圓仁, expanded the shrine into a monastery. In 1951, the Kong Hoa Sie (*Guanghua si* 廣化寺) was opened and named after the ancestral temple Guanghua Monastery in China. It was to become an important site for the development of Chinese Buddhism in postcolonial Indonesia.[76]

Figure 1.4: Portraits of Pen Ching (right) and Ashin Jinarakkhita (left) in the Ancestral Shrine of Kong Hoa Sie. Photo by author.

[76] *Untukmu Mahasthavira*, 29-30; "Guanghua si 廣化寺," in Franke, Salmon, and Siu, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials*, 108-111.

The arrival and settlement of Chinese monks, and the subsequent construction of monasteries in the East Indies, Malaya, and Singapore, paved the way to the emergence of institutional Buddhism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These monks attempted to spread Buddhist doctrinal teachings to the overseas Chinese community. However, the dearth of monks and Buddhist organizations meant that institutional Buddhism had a limited reach and remained disconnected from the majority of the Chinese population in maritime Southeast Asia.

Buddhist Modernism in Early Twentieth-Century China

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, socio-political changes in China gave rise to a Buddhist modernism movement, which in turn contributed to the making of vibrant South China Sea Buddhist networks. By the late half of the nineteenth century, Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), the last of the imperial dynasties of China under the Manchu leaders, was facing an immense crisis. China's consecutive defeats in the First Opium War (1839-1842), Second Opium War (1856-1860), Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) by the imperial powers led to the signing of many unequal treaties, and resulted in a serious strain on the state treasury. To make matter worse, the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) in the south and the Nian Rebellion (1851-1868) in the north although failed to overthrow the Qing dynasty, caused immense economic damage and loss of life. The presence of Westerners in the treaty port cities contributed to the spread of Christianity

and "Western learning" (*xixue* 西學) into China. Some political reformers were drawn to the Western learning and saw it as a way to save China from Western imperialism.[77]

During that time, a handful of Chinese scholar-reformers were appreciative of Buddhist doctrines, and hoped the Buddhists could contribute to the revival and strengthening of the waning dynasty. For example, China's influential political activist Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873-1929) argued in 1902 that the "achievement of progress in China would require a religious 'belief' (*xinyang* 信仰) and that Buddhism rather than Confucianism or Christianity would serve China best in a modern age."[78] On the other hand, many political reformers saw Buddhist monks as ritual specialists for monetary gains and concluded that the average monk had little education and ability to contribute towards national revival. Some even proposed that the Qing government should confiscate assets of Buddhist monasteries to fund the state's modernization efforts. For instance, Zhang Zhidong (張之洞, 1837-1909), the Viceroy of Huguang (*Huguang zongdu* 胡廣總督) who was an active educational and military reformer, radically suggested that the Qing authorities could seize 70 percent of the properties of Buddhist monasteries and Taoist temples to finance the state's education reform. He argued that because the seized assets would reinforce Confucianism as the guiding

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[77] Wang Rongguo, *Fujian Fojiao shi* 福建佛教史 (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 1997), chapter 6; Don A. Pittman, *Towards a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), chapter 1; Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), chapter 1.

[78] Jan Kiely and J. Brooks Jessup, "Introduction," in *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China*, eds. Jan Kiely and J. Brooks Jessup (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 1.

political ideology for the state, which in turn led to a stronger and more stable Qing government that could protect and benefit the development of Buddhism and Taoism in the long run.[79]

The 1911 Revolution ended the Qing Dynasty and gave birth to the Republic of China in 1912. The early years of the Republic were a time of intellectual and cultural creativity. The emergence of a "New Cultural Movement" (*xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動) beginning in the mid-1910s, which culminated in the May Fourth Movement (*wusi yundong* 五四運動) in 1919, and continued into the 1920s, was a time where intellectuals and university iconoclasts attacked Confucian values, Chinese patriarchal traditions, and popular religious superstitions, while promoted science, democracy, and the use of the vernacular to increase literacy.[80] During the Nanjing Decade (1927-37) of Republican era, the Kuomintang government based on claims of secular nationalism and mobilizational politics further launched an "anti-superstition" campaign to regulate religious institutions and activities.[81]

Buddhist clerics and laity perceived the proposed confiscation of Buddhist properties during the late Qing period and the Republican government's anti-superstition campaign as an attack on Buddhist institutions. This gave rise to a number

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[79] Pittman, *Towards a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 28-29.
[80] See Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, chapters 2-3.
[81] See Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009); Shuk-wah Poon, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China: State and Common People in Guangzhou, 1900-1937* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011).

of prominent monks and lay leaders, who sought to inspire and lead the Buddhist modernist movement to "reform" the religion. In the first decade of the twentieth century, when Qing government ended the civil service examination and began to question the contributions of religion to society, Buddhist modernists established new seminaries, charitable schools, and orphanages.

Subsequently, following the founding of the Republic, Buddhist modernists established national-level Buddhist associations to protect their interests, founded lay Buddhist association, set up Buddhist printing presses, and engaged in philanthropic activities.[82] Some Buddhist intellectuals embraced scientific language and ideas and even engaged in dialogues on subatomic and relativistic physics.[83] In a nutshell, the Buddhist modernist movement in China during the early half of the twentieth century were characterized by (1) reform of leadership system in the Buddhist monasteries;[84] (2) founding of new Buddhist research institution, as well as lay and women's organizations;[85] (3) publishing of Buddhist periodicals such as *Buddhist Studies Monthly* (*Foxue yuebao* 佛學月報), *Awakening Society Collectanea* (*Jueshe congshu* 覺社叢書), and *Sound of the Sea Tide* (*Haichao yin* 海潮音); (4) the printing and

[82] Kiely and Jessup, "Introduction," 7.
[83] Erik J. Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism: Early Twentieth-Century Engagements* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
[84] Wang, *Fujian Fojiao shi*, 345-347.
[85] James Brooks Jessup, "The Householder Elite: Buddhist Activism in Shanghai, 1920-1956" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010); J. Brooks Jessup, "Buddhist Activism, Urban Space, and Ambivalent Modernity in 1920s Shanghai," in *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China*, 37-78.

distribution of free Dharma books and opening of Buddhist libraries;[86] (5) setting up Buddhist academies such as the Wuchang Buddhist Institute (*Wuchang foxue yuan* 武昌佛學院), the Minnan Buddhist Institute (*Minnan foxue yuan* 閩南佛學院), and the Sino-Tibetan Institute (*Hanzang jiaoli yuan* 漢藏教理院);[87] and (6) the promotion of Buddhist charity and philanthropic activities.[88] These Buddhist reformers participated in the kind of modernist projects as defined by Anne Hansen and David McMahon in the previous chapter.[89] As I will discuss later, these modernist monks made claims of the relevance of Buddhist doctrines to issues of the time and promoted Buddhism based on national particularity.

Nanputuo Monastery (*Nanputuo si* 南普陀寺), a famous Buddhist monastery located in Xiamen (also known as Amoy), a major port city in Fujian province on China's southeastern coast, became a significant headquarter for these modernist monks. Many historians have noticed the strategic coastal location of Xiamen since the early modern period, which contributed to its importance both as a major port for maritime trade, as well as an ancestral hometown (*qiaoxiang* 僑鄉) for many Chinese

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[86] Gregory Adam Scott, "Conversion by the Book: Buddhist Print Culture in Early Republican China" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2013); Gregory Adam Scott, "A Revolution of Ink, Chinese Buddhist Periodicals in the Early Republic," in *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China*, 111-140.

[87] Lei Kuan Rongdao Lai, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2013).

[88] Wang, *Fujian Fojiao shi*, 354-356.

[89] See Anne Ruth Hansen, *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity in Colonial Cambodia, 1860-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

who immigrated to various parts of Southeast Asia. Ng Chin-Keong has pointed out that the rise of Xiamen and its development into a maritime center for the South China Sea trade began around the first half of the seventeenth century. Following the establishment of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of maritime customs in 1684, Xiamen became a key port for the distribution of Chinese native products and foreign goods in Southern China. The Xiamen trading networks connected Tianjin 天津, Shanghai 上海, Ningbo 寧波 in the north, Taiwan 台湾 in the east, Guangdong 廣東 and Quanzhou 泉州 in the west, and Nanyang 南洋 in the south.[90] The vibrant maritime trade in Xiamen, which allowed frequent contact with the outside world, as well as remittances from the overseas Chinese, had led to the rapid urbanization of the coastal city at the turn of the twentieth century.[91] In fact, scholars have recognized the significance of the diasporic ties that connected the overseas Chinese to their *qiaoxiang* in Xiamen. Some even argued that the overseas Chinese played a pivotal role in the modernization of the southeastern coast of China and of Xiamen in particular. These remittance networks would later become the basis for much of the southeast coastal prosperity and modernity that stands in the heart of present-day China.[92] Given the strategic location of the Nanputuo Monastery in the port city of

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[90] Ng, *Trade and* Society, 95-152.

[91] Zhou Zifeng 周子峰, *Jindai Xiamen chengshi fazhan shi yanjiu (1900-1937)* 近代廈門城市發展史研究 (1900-1937) (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2005).

[92] See, for instance, James A. Cook, "Bridges to Modernity: Xiamen, Overseas Chinese, and the Southeast Coastal Modernization, 1843-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1998), 3-4; James A. Cook, "Currents of Education and Identity: Overseas Chinese and Minnan Schools, 1912-1937," *Twentieth-Century China* 25, 2 (April 2000): 1-31; Carolyn Cartier, *Globalizing South China* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.), chapters 4-5.

Xiamen, which was a nodal point of the maritime trading networks and epicenter of Chinese migration, it became a major base for the Buddhist modernist movement and monastic education during the first decade of the twentieth century.[93]

According to the temple gazetteer, the Nanputuo Monastery was originally named as Four Continents Monastery (*Sizhou si* 泗洲寺). During the Zhiping 治平 period in the Song dynasty (1064-1067), the monastery was renamed as Puzhao Monastery (*Puzhao si* 普照寺). By the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), it fell into disuse. Venerable Jueguang 覺光 rebuilt the monastery during the Hongwu 洪武 period in the Ming dynasty (1368-1398), and worshipped the Śākyamuni Buddha and the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva.[94] The monastery was destroyed by war at the end of the Ming dynasty. In 1683, during the Qing dynasty, Marquis Shi Lang (施琅, 1621-1696), the General of Jinghai 靖海 rebuilt and renamed the monastery Nanputuo, meaning South Potalaka.[95] Shi Lang invited Venerable Huiri 慧日, a Chan master from the Linji sect (*Linji zong* 臨濟宗), to become the abbot of the Nanputuo Monastery, making the monastery a tonsure kinship temple (*zisun miao* 子孫廟) of the Heyun lineage (*heyun pai* 喝雲派) of the Linji sect. Following Huiri, successive

[93] *Xiamen Fojiao zhi* 廈門佛教志 (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubashe, 2006), 7.
[94] For a brief biography of Jueguang, see *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 258.
[95] Potalaka is the mythological home of the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. See Yu, *Kuan-yin*, 25.

abbots of the monastery were selected based on tonsure affiliation with Linji's Heyun lineage.[96]

Figure 1.5: Nanputuo Monastery in Present-day Xiamen. Photo by author.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the socio-political changes in China as discussed earlier inspired a number of modernist monks, who became abbots of Nanputuo Monastery, to make changes to the religious institution. In 1920, Venerable Zhuanfeng (轉逢, 1879-1952) became the abbot of Nanputuo Monastery after serving for several years as the superintendent of the monastery. A precept-disciple of the

[96] *Xiamen Nanputuo sizhi* 廈門南普陀寺志 (Xiamen: Xiamen Nanputuo Si, 1933), 1-2; *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 49-50.

previous abbot, Venerable Xican (喜參, 1848-1911), Zhuanfeng received his monastic trainings at Ningbo Tiantong Monastery (*Ningbo Tiantong si* 寧波天童寺) and Golden Mountain Jiangtian Monastery (*Jinshan Jiangtian si* 金山江天寺) prior to arriving at Nanputuo Monastery. Zhuanfeng sought to revamp the abbacy system of the monastery and convert it from an tonsure kinship temple system to a monastery of the ten directions (*shifang conglin* 十方叢林). Monasteries of the ten directions adopted a system of succession in which a renowned monk was invited to serve as abbot of the monastery, regardless his tonsure affiliation to the lineage of the preceding abbot.[97] In doing so, Zhuanfeng hoped to eradicate nepotism in the selection of future abbots, and to create a more democratic means to elect good leaders to run the monastery.[98]

In 1924, Venerable Huiquan (會泉, 1874-1942) was elected to succeed Zhuanfeng as the abbot of Nanputuo Monastery. Huiquan was born in Tong'an 同安 district in Xiamen, Fujian. He was ordained at the Tiger Creek Rock Monastery (*Huxi yan si* 虎溪岩寺) in Xiamen, and later, received his higher ordination at the Congfu Monastery (*Chongfu si* 崇福寺) in the neighboring Zhangzhou 漳州 prefecture. Huiquan traveled widely and received his monastic training at various monasteries in Ningpo, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang provinces. His classmates at the Ningpo Tiantong Monastery included Taixu (太虛, 1890-1947) and Yuanying (圓瑛, 1878-1953),

[97] Robert E Buswell, Jr. and Donald S Lopez, Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 804.
[98] *Xiamen Nanputuo sizhi*, 78-79; *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 282-284.

whom I will discuss later. During the turn of the twentieth century, Huiquan was worried that the proposed confiscation of Buddhist properties and the anti-superstition campaign would negatively affect the Buddhist community. In 1906, he returned to his native Fujian provice to launch the "Propagate the Dharma, Revive the Religion" (*hongfa, xingjiao* 弘法、興教) movement at Chengtian Monastery (*Chengtian si* 承天寺) in Quanzhou, and a year later, gave a series of lectures on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (*Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經) at the Xuefeng Monastery (*Xuefeng si* 雪峰寺). In 1909, he established Tiger Creek Lotus Society (*Huxi lianshe* 虎溪蓮社) at the Tiger Creek Rock Monastery to conduct Dharma lectures.

Following the founding of the Republic, Huiquan became the abbot of Chengtian Monastery and established the Udumbara Elementary Learning Grove (*Youtan xuelin* 優曇學林) to teach basic Buddhist knowledge to both monastic and laity. His efforts to promote Buddhist doctrines and education earned him the reputation of the "leading Sangha of Southern Fujian" (*Minnan sengzhong jubo* 閩南僧中巨擘). After being elected as the abbot of Nanputuo Monastery in 1924 under the new "monastery of the ten directions" abbacy system, Huiquan sought to promote Buddhist education in Southern China.[99] A year later, he established the Minnan Buddhist Institute (*Minnan foxue yuan* 閩南佛學院), which became an influential seminary and intellectual center for Buddhist education in Republican China. The seminary provided a comprehensive three-year education, covering areas including

[99] *Xiamen Nanputuo sizhi*, 83-84; *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 273-275.

Buddhist doctrines, monastic discipline, classical Chinese, foreign languages such as English and Japanese, mathematics, history, geography, science, philosophy, arts, sports, community service.[100] Upon completing his three-year term as abbot of Nanputuo Monastery and founding rector of the Minnan Buddhist Institute, Huiquan decided to step down in 1927 and was succeeded by renowned Buddhist modernist thinker, Master Taixu.

Taixu was one of the most prominent figures among the Chinese Buddhist modernists during the Republican period. Born in 1890 in the Chongde 崇德 County of Zhejiang province, he became a novice in Jiangsu, and received his higher ordination at the Tiantong Monastery in Ningpo. After his higher ordination, Taixu along with his classmates Huiquan and Yuanying received their monastic training at the Tiantong Monastery under the tutelage of Master Jichan (寄禪, 1852-1912). Later, he studied the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* with lay Buddhist scholar Yang Wenhui (楊文會, 1837-1911), and English with translator Su Manshu (蘇曼殊, 1884-1918), at the Jetavana Hermitage (*Zhihuan jingshe* 祇洹精舍) in Nanjing.[101] With the founding of the Republic in 1912, Taixu established the China Buddhist Association (*Zhongguo*

[100] "Minnan Foxue yuan yuanqi wen 閩南佛學院緣起文," in *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 507. For a syllabus of Minnan Buddhist Institute, see *Xiamen Nanputuo sizhi*, pp. 41-43; On Minnan Buddhist Institute, see Lai, "Praying for the Republic."

[101] Yang Wenhui is often known as the "father of the revival of modern Chinese Buddhism" (*jindai zhongguo fojiao fuxing zhi fu* 近代中國佛教復興之父). In 1908, he established the Jetavana Hermitage as a seminary for monastic and laity in Nanjing. Yang Wenhui also setup the Jingling Scriptural Press to print and distribute Buddhist texts. For a biography of Yang, see Gabriele Goldfuss, *Vers un Bouddhisme du XXe Siècle: Yang Wenhui (1837-1911), Réformateur Laïque et Imprimeur* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 2001).

fojiao hui 中國佛教會) in Nanjing and spearheaded the "Buddhist revival movement" (*Fojiao fuxing yundong* 佛教復興運動). He pointed out the need to reform the monastic system and promote education. However, Taixu's ideas were deemed too radical, and he soon became ostracized by his conservative peers. Unable to obtain support for his movement, Taixu was disappointed and spent two years in solitary retreat at Putuo Monastery (*Putuo si* 普陀寺). Thereafter, he spent the next few years observing and studying the Buddhist community in Japan and Taiwan. In 1918, Taixu returned from Japan to set up the Awakening Society (*Jueshe* 覺社) in Shanghai with help from lay Buddhist leaders Chen Yuanbai 陳元白, Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, and Wang Yiting 王一亭, and became the founding editor of the *Awakening Society Collectanea*. The *Awakening Society Collectanea*, which later became a monthly periodical *Sound of the Sea Tide*, provided a platform for Taixu to publish his ideas on Buddhist modernism. In 1922, Taixu founded the Wuchang Buddhist Institute, where he aimed to educate a new generation of young monks in China. A year later, he became the inaugural president of the World Buddhist Fellowship (*Fojiao shilian hui* 佛教世聯會). With a growing reputation among like-minded Buddhist modernists, Taixu was elected to succeed Huiquan as the abbot of Nanputuo Monastery and rector of the Minnan Buddhist Institute in 1927.[102]

An energetic and intellectual monk highly revered by Buddhists in China and overseas, Taixu called for a revitalization of Buddhism through "institutional

[102] *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 278-280.

reorganization, modern education, compassionate social action, and ecumenical cooperation in global mission."[103] He advocated "Human-life Buddhism" (*rensheng fojiao* 人生佛教) as a remedy for Chinese Buddhism, which had been giving much emphasis on death, funerary rites, and otherworldly salvation. Taixu wanted to change the image and understanding of Buddhism as a religion for the dead to emphasize on the practice of Buddhism for this-worldly life. Therefore, he was more concerned with establishing a pure land on earth (*renjian jingtu* 人間淨土) than in achieving rebirth in the Western pure land. Taixu's ideas of Human-life Buddhism were aimed at addressing the pressing social and spiritual problems of the twentieth century. In his authoritative study of Taixu, Don Pittman suggests that first, Taixu was an "ethical pietist," who encouraged individual piety and living a vigorous Buddhist life by drawing on the philosophy of the Consciousness-Only (*weishi* 唯識) school. Taixu believed that religious actions were at the core of the spiritual practice and a bodhisattva's process of spiritual transformation. Second, Taixu taught that Buddhists should strive to be socially responsible, and promoted a soteriology that emphasized action as fundamentally interconnected to the transformation of the social order.[104] Therefore, Taixu could be considered as a Buddhist modernist according to the terms I defined in the previous chapter.

Under the stewardship of Taixu, Nanputuo Monastery became a prominent headquarters for the Buddhist modernism movement in South China, and served as a

[103] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 2.
[104] Ibid., 3-8.

key nodal point in the Buddhist networks connecting the modernist monks in China and the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. In the following section, I will reveal how the South China Sea Buddhist networks played a significant role in the transnational circulation of people, ideas, and resources during the early half of the twentieth century.

Dharmic Ties across the South China Sea

The South China Sea networks brought Taixu and several of his associates to maritime Southeast Asia; among the prominent ones were Venerables Zhuandao, Cihang, and Yuanying. Born in the Jinjiang 晉江 County of Fujian province, Venerable Zhuandao (轉道, 1872-1943) was ordained in South Mountain Monastery (*Nanshan si* 南山寺) in Zhangzhou, Fujian, and received his monastic training at various monasteries, including the Tiantong Monastery, where he was classmate with Huiquan, Taixu, and Yuanying. In 1909, Zhuandao was invited to be the acting abbot of Nanputuo Monastery when abbot Xican was on retreat. A few years later in 1913, Zhuandao went to Singapore for the first time to raise funds for the Sangha College (*Sengqie xueyuan* 僧伽學院) at Nanputuo Monastery. In Singapore, he was invited to become the abbot of Thian Hock Keng, a prominent Mazu temple which I discussed earlier in this chapter, where he became known for providing free medical treatment to the Chinese immigrant community. Later, Zhuandao played an active role in promoting institutional Buddhism and building Buddhist monasteries in Singapore. He

founded the Phor Toh See (*Xinjiapo putuo si* 新加坡普陀寺) in 1915 and the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See (*Guangmingshan pujue si* 光明山普覺寺) in 1921. He also assisted with the establishment of three lay Buddhist associations, namely, the Chinese Buddhist Association (*Zhonghua fojiao hui* 中華佛教會) which we will learn more later, the Singapore Buddhist Lodge (*Xinjiapo fojiao jushilin* 新加坡佛教居士林), and the Buddhist Union (*Fojiao hui* 佛教會). Zhuandao also attempted to set up the Singapore Buddhist Institute (*Xingzhou foxue yuan* 星洲佛學院), which was closed down by the British colonial authorities for alleged communist activities, and the Zhuandao Buddhist Institute (*Zhuandao foxue yuan* 轉道佛學院). Additionally, he started three Buddhist periodicals *The Flower of Enlightenment* (*Juehua* 覺華), *The Light of Enlightenment* (*Juedeng* 覺燈), and *Buddhism and Buddhist Studies* (*Fojiao yu foxue* 佛教與佛學) to spread the Buddhist doctrines in Singapore. These temple building and Dharma propagation efforts earned him the reputation of "originator of Buddhism in Singapore" (*Xingzhou fomen bizu* 星洲佛門鼻祖).[105]

Venerable Yuanying (圓瑛, 1878-1953) was another seminal figure in the propagation of Buddhism in Malaya and Singapore. Born in Gutian 古田 County of Fujian province, Yuanying was ordained at the Drum Mountain Yongquan Monastery in Fuzhou. He received his monastic training at the Tianning Monastery (*Tianning si* 天寧寺) in Changzhou 常州 for five years, and later, at the Tiantong Monastery in

[105] See Zhang Wenxue 張文學, *Haiqing Zhuandao chanshi* 海清轉道禪師 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2017), chapters 4-5.

Ningbo for six years, under the tutelage of Jichan. In 1909, he was appointed as the abbot of Jiedai Monastery (*Jiedai si* 接待寺) in Ningbo. Yuanying was an active preacher and was known for being a serious researcher of the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra.* He wrote and published the *Lecture Notes on the Śūraṃgama Sūtra* (*Lengyan jing jiangyi* 楞嚴經講義) to make the teachings accessible to a broader audience. In 1923, Zhuandao, the founding abbot of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See, invited Yuanying to give a series of lectures in Singapore. When Huiquan became the founding rector of the Minnan Buddhist Institute, he appointed Yuanying as an advisor of the Buddhist seminary. A decade later in 1938, Yuanying visited Penang and was requested to succeed Benzhong to become the third abbot of Kek Lok Si in Penang.[106] During Yuanying's religious career in Penang, he lectured on a wide variety of scriptures to the overseas Chinese community, including the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra*, *Lotus Sūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經), *Heart Sūtra* (*Bore boluo miduo xinjing* 般若波羅蜜多心經), *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing* 金剛經), *Amitābha Sūtra* (*Amituo jing* 阿彌陀經), and the *Chapter of the Universal Gate* (*Pumen pin* 普門品). It was said that Yuanying's lectures "were often filled with audiences of several hundreds and his refuge disciples numbered thousands."[107]

A third important figure was Venerable Cihang (慈航, 1895-1954), a pioneer in the development of Buddhist education in Malaya and Singapore. He was born in Jianning 見寧 County in the Fujian province and was ordained at the Emei Peak (*Emei*

[106] *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 284-285.
[107] Wang, *Fujian Fojiao shi*, 378.

feng 峨眉峰). After receiving his higher ordination, he studied Chan meditation with Yuanying, scriptures with Dixian (諦閑, 1858-1932), and Pure Land Buddhism with Du'e 度厄. Subsequently, Cihang became a student of Taixu and was influenced by the ideas of Human-life Buddhism. Cihang taught for several years at the Guangfu Monastery (*Guangfu si* 廣福寺) in Wuxi 無錫, Jiangsu. In 1940, Taixu invited Cihang along for his tour of Asian countries, where they visited the Buddhist communities in India, Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Malaya, and Singapore. After the tour, Taixu returned to China, while Cihang decided to stay behind to promote Buddhist education in Malaya and Singapore.[108] He founded the Leng Foong Bodhi Institute (*Lingfeng puti xueyuan* 靈峰菩提學院) and monastic dormitories (*fashi liao* 法師寮) in Singapore.[109] He also played an important role in the expansion of the Phor Tay School (*Puti xueyuan* 菩提學院) in Penang, and the founding of the Mahabodhi School (*Puti xuexiao* 菩提學校) in Singapore.[110] In the spring of 1948, Venerable Miaoguo (妙果, 1884-1963), the abbot of Yuan Kuang Monastery (*Yuanguang si* 圓光寺) in Zhongli 中壢, Taiwan, invited Cihang to become the founding rector of the Taiwan Buddhist Institute (*Taiwan Foxue yuan* 台灣佛學院). Cihang accepted the request and left Southeast Asia to continue his religious career in Taiwan. He led the Taiwan Buddhist Institute, and later, founded the Maitreya Inner Hall (*Mile neiyuan*

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[108] Yinshun 印順, *Taixu dashi nianpu* 太虛大師年譜 (Hsinchu: Zhengwen chubanshe, 2000), 448-454.
[109] Shi Nengdu 釋能度, Shi Xiantong 釋賢通, He Xiujuan 何秀娟, and Xu Yuantai 許原泰, eds., *Xinjiapo hanchuan fojiao fazhan gaishu* 新加坡漢傳佛教發展概述 (Singapore: Buddha of Medicine Welfare Society, 2010), 209.
[110] Ibid., 382-383.

彌勒內院) in Taipei 台北 County to propagate the teachings of the Maitreya bodhisattva (*Mile pusa* 彌勒菩薩), the Buddha of the future.[111] In 1954, Cihang passed away at the Maitreya Inner Hall and became Taiwan's first Buddhist mummy (*roushen pusa* 肉身菩薩).[112]

The South China Sea Buddhist networks were crucial in contributing to the development of Buddhist modernism in China and Southeast Asia. The transnational networks facilitated the movement of Buddhist monks from China to Southeast Asia and fostered the dissemination of Buddhist modernist ideas to the overseas Chinese communities, while the transfer of monetary resources from Southeast Asia helped fund the religious activities in China. When Taixu became the abbot of the Nanputuo Monastery, he saw the need to raise funds for the promotion of monastic education at the Minnan Buddhist Institute. He relied on the South China Sea networks to seek donations from the overseas Chinese. Taixu made three visits to Singapore, in 1926, 1928, and 1940. During his first visit in 1926, Taixu met with several prominent Chinese businessmen, and became acquainted with Tan Kah Kee (Chen Jiageng 陳嘉庚, 1874-1961) and Aw Boon Haw (Hu Wenhu 胡文虎, 1882-1954). The two wealthy businessmen were influential leaders among the Chinese community. Tan Kah Kee was born in Xiamen, and immigrated to Singapore in 1890 to help his father's rice trading business. He later started his own business and made a fortune from pineapple

[111] See Kan Zhengzong 闞正宗, *Taiwan gaoseng* 台灣高僧 (Taipei: Puti changqing chubanshe, 1996), 47-91.
[112] Douglas Gildow and Marcus Bingenheimer, "Buddhist Mummification in Taiwan: Two Case Studies," *Asia Major* 15, 2 (2002): 92.

canning, rubber plantations, and properties. Similar to Low Kim Pong who built the Siong Lim Monastery, Tan Kah Kee was held in high esteem as a local business and community leader, and served as the chairman of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as the president of the Singapore Hokkien Association.[113] When Taixu was in Singapore, Tan Kah Kee played host and invited the monk to visit his rubber plantations, factories, and shops.[114]

Aw Boon Haw, a Hakka Chinese born in Burma, immigrated to Malaya with his brother, Aw Boon Par (Hu Wenbao 胡文豹, 1888-1944) in 1926. They made a fortune selling Tiger Balm (*Hubiao wanjin you* 虎標萬金油), a famous topical pain relieving ointment, in Malaya and Singapore. Aw Boon Haw became a well-known businessman and philanthropist, and he often made generous donations to hospitals, schools, and Buddhist monasteries in China and Southeast Asia.[115] For example, Aw Boon Haw and his brother made a huge donation to the Kek Lok Si and had their names inscribed on a huge plaque that reads "Ocean of Heaven on the Buddha's land" (*Haitian fodi* 海天佛地).[116] During his visit to Singapore, Aw Boon Haw hosted

[113] For a biography of Tan Kah Kee, see C. F. Yong, *Tan Kah Kee: The Making of an Overseas Chinese Legend* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[114] Taixu 太虛, *Taixu zizhuan* 太虛自傳 (Xingzhou: Nanyang Foxue shuju, 1971), 137.
[115] For a biography of Aw Boon Haw, see Sherman Cochran, *Chinese Medicine Men: Consumer Culture in China and Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), chapter 6.
[116] "Haitian fodi bian 海天佛地匾," in *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, 628.

Taixu and invited him to stay at his mansion.[117] Taixu engaged Aw Boon Haw in discussions on Buddhism and trade during his stay at Aw's mansion. He advised Aw to be an honest and righteous businessman, and continue to make contributions to charity. The modernist monk also encouraged Aw to observe the Buddhist teachings in his daily life.[118]

Taixu's friendship with the local Chinese leaders demonstrates the significance of the South China Sea networks. The transnational networks allowed Taixu to establish friendly ties with the overseas Chinese in maritime Southeast Asia and enabled him to seek financial support from wealthy overseas Chinese businessmen. Furthermore, this provided him the opportunity to preach his ideas of Human-life Buddhism to them. As wealthy Chinese leaders such as Tan Kah Kee and Aw Boon Haw were important benefactors of Buddhist monasteries in Southeast Asia, Taixu was able to acquire financial support from these wealthy businessmen for his renovation project at the Nanputuo Monastery, as well as to fund his education endeavor at the Minnan Buddhist Institute.[119] For example, when the Hall of the Avalokiteśvara (*Guanyin dian* 觀音殿) was destroyed by fire in 1928, Taixu, together with the executive members of the temple committee, embarked on an ambitious

[117] Taixu, *Taixu zizhuan*, 137.
[118] Taixu 太虛, "Yu Hu Wenhu jun tanhua 與胡文虎君談話," in *Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虛大師全書, volume 27 (Xianggang : Taixu dashi quanshu chuban weiyuan hui, 1956), 741-742.
[119] Shi, *Xinjiapo Fojiao fazhan shi*, 92-94.

fundraising project to seek donations from the overseas Chinese devotees.[120] Within five years, they were able to raise approximately 50,000 *yuan* to rebuild the hall.[121]

The South China Sea Buddhist networks were crucial in channeling the much needed financial support from the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia to the Nanputuo Monastery in Xiamen. In fact, this movement of monetary resources via the transnational networks can be viewed in parallel to the broader remittance networks, which connected the overseas Chinese communities with Xiamen, and with the Fujian province in general. The overseas Chinese played a highly pivotal role in the modernization of Xiamen during the first half of the twentieth century. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, most of China's urban areas such as Beijing 北京, Jinan 濟南, Nanjing 南京, and Tianjin 天津 underwent development, but achieved slow success due to the lack of funds. On the contrary, Xiamen because of the overseas Chinese capital from mercantile success abroad, was transformed into a modern urban city "complete with broad avenues, municipal parks, modern residences, and office buildings."[122] Similarly, the overseas Chinese donations also helped to expand and modernize the Nanputuo Monastery, and fund Taixu's Buddhist modernist movement in China. This demonstrates how monetary resources flowed from Southeast Asia to Xiamen via both secular and religious networks, and contributed to the development of the city during the first half of the twentieth century.

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[120] "Xiamen Nanputuo chongjian Guanyin dian mujuan yuanqi 廈門南普陀重建觀音殿募捐緣起," in *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 507-508.
[121] "Nanputuo si chongjian dabei dian ji 南普陀寺重建大悲殿記," in *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 508.
[122] Cook, "Bridges to Modernity," 223-224.

Taixu had an ambitious plan to spread his ideas of Human-life Buddhism beyond China. He wanted to organize an ecumenical Buddhist movement on a global scale and extend the reach of his Buddhist modernist movement.[123] The South China Sea Buddhist networks were significant in supporting the missionary efforts of Taixu and his associates in the dissemination of their ideas to maritime Southeast Asia. In September 1926, Venerable Taixu came to Singapore to propagation the Dharma. He presented a series of talks at the Victoria Memorial Hall, which attracted a large number of overseas Chinese.[124] Because most of the Buddhist monasteries in Singapore in the early twentieth century tended to be disconnected with the laity, Taixu felt that the establishment of a lay Buddhist association would be beneficial in propagating the religion to the overseas Chinese community. Therefore, in one of his lectures, Taixu suggested the establishment of a lay Buddhist association to meet the spiritual needs of the laity.[125]

Taixu's suggestion inspired Ning Dayun 寧達蘊, a lay Buddhist leader in Singapore, to establish a Buddhist association for the benefit of the overseas Chinese community. A year later in 1927, Ning Dayun founded the Chinese Buddhist Association (*Zhonghua Fojiao hui* 中華佛教會) with the support of the local Chinese

[123] Pittman, *Towards a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 105-106.
[124] Taixu, *Taixu zizhuan*, 136-137.
[125] Shi, *Xinjiapo Fojiao fazhan shi*, 96; Shi, Shi, He, and Xu, *Xinjiapo hanchuan fojiao fazhan gaishu*, 315-317.

leaders.[126] The Buddhist association, which was located in Singapore's Chinatown in Kreta Ayer, became the first lay Buddhist organization in Singapore. It became an important lay organization for the promotion of Buddhist modernist movement in Singapore, providing education and welfare services for the overseas Chinese communities. Strategically located in Kreta Ayer where most of the Chinese migrants resided, the Chinese Buddhist Association played an important role in the spread of Buddhist teachings and the provision of social services to the Chinese immigrants.[127] The establishment of Chinese Buddhist Association was an evidence of the spread of Buddhist modernist ideas from Xiamen to Singapore. It demonstrates how Taixu's "Buddhist revival movement" began to take roots in maritime Southeast Asia and further contribute to the institutional Buddhism which had taken roots in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

[126] Shi, *Xinjiapo Fojiao fazhan shi*, 96-97.
[127] Shi, Shi, He, and Xu, *Xinjiapo hanchuan fojiao fazhan gaishu*, 41.

Figure 1.6: Taixu (second row, thirteenth from left) with Zhuandao (second row, twelfth from left), Cihang (second row, eleventh from left), and Puliang (second row, tenth from left) in Singapore, 1940.

Source: Shi, Shi, He, and Xu, *Xinjiapo hanchuan fojiao fazhan gaishu*, 41.

Additionally, Taixu was making plans to establish a World Buddhist Federation (*Shijie Fojiao lianhe hui* 世界佛教聯合會) to achieve his ecumenical vision, and further expand the South China Sea Buddhist networks into a global network for the propagation of Human-life Buddhism around the world. He also suggested the establishment of a Nanyang Buddhist Association (*Nanyang Fojiao hui* 南洋佛教會), a regional Buddhist organization to link up the three Southeast Asian countries—Dutch East Indies, Malaya and Singapore—with its headquarter to be based in Singapore. Taixu believed that Singapore could serve as a regional hub for Buddhist missionary activities and hoped that the association could link the three

maritime Southeast Asian states to broader global Buddhist networks.[128] He saw potential in the development of Buddhism in Singapore and believed that if a regional Buddhist hub was to be established in Singapore, it could contribute to the advancement of Buddhist education, provision of social services, and fostering research in Buddhist Studies in Southeast Asia.[129] Although Taixu's vision for a Nanyang Buddhist Association never materialized, it reveals his attempt to expand the South China Sea networks with an ecumenical vision.

When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, Taixu condemned the Japanese invasion of China and rallied young monks to patriotically support and participate in the war against Japan. Subsequently, Sangha ambulance units (*Senglü jiuhu dui* 僧侶救護隊) and logistic support teams (*houyuan hui* 後援會) were formed to treat wounded soldiers and support the Chinese war effort.[130] The South China Sea networks became an important resource for a Buddhist-led fundraising effort, and later an "escape route" for the monks to flee Southern China following the defeat and Japanese occupation of Xiamen. When the war broke out, Yuanying was the abbot of Kek Lok Si in Penang. A nationalistic monk, he was determined to lead the Buddhist community in the struggle against Japanese aggression. He supported the establishment of the Disaster Relief Group of the China Buddhist Association

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[128] Taixu 太虛, "Quan Nanyang Fojiao zuzhi zhi xiwang 全南洋佛教組織之希望," in *Taixu dashi quanshu*, volume 28, 234.
[129] Taixu 太虛, "Nanyang fojiaohui zhi zhanwang 南洋佛教會之展望," in *Taixu dashi quanshu*, volume 28, 618-619.
[130] For a study of Buddhism and nationalism in the Sino-Japanese War, see Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle Against Japanese Aggression 1931-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

(*Zhongguo Fojiao hui zaiqu jiuhu tuan* 中國佛教會災區救護團), and with his disciple, Mingyang 明暘, raised money for China's relief funds in Southeast Asia.[131]

With the donations collected from the overseas Chinese, Yuanying returned to China to form three ambulance units, namely, the First Jinghu Sangha Ambulance Unit (*Diyi Jinghu senglü jiuhu dui* 第一京滬僧侶救護隊); the Second Hankou Sangha Ambulance Unit (*Dier Hankou senglü jiuhu dui* 第二漢口僧侶救護隊); and the Third Ningbo Sangha Ambulance Unit (*Disan Ningbo senglü jiuhu dui* 第三寧波僧侶救護隊). Additionally, the monk established a Buddhist hospital in Shanghai to provide medical care for wounded soldiers and war refugees from Northern China. With the fall of Shanghai at the end of 1937, Yuanying and Mingyang were arrested by the Japanese at the Shanghai Yuanming Auditorium (*Shanghai yuanming jiangtang* 上海圓明講堂) for their war resistance activities. The two monks were interrogated and tortured by the Japanese soldiers, but both refused to cooperate. After several months of detention, they were released and kept under close surveillance until the end of the war in 1945.[132]

Unlike Yuanying who relied on the South China Sea Buddhist networks to raise funds for the Chinese war effort, some monks relied on the networks to flee the war in China and found refuge in Southeast Asia. Among them were Huiquan and his

[131] *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 285.
[132] Wang, *Fujian Fojiao shi*, 380.

disciple Hong Choon (Hongchuan 宏船, 1907-1990), Kong Hiap (Guangqia 廣洽, 1900-1994), and Siong Khye (Changkai 常凱, 1916-1990). These monks fled to Malaya and Singapore, where they later became prominent Buddhist leaders among the overseas Chinese communities.[133] Huiquan became the abbot of Beow Heong Lim Monastery (*Miaoxiang lin si* 妙香林寺) in Penang, and passed away in 1943 before the war ended.[134] Huiquan's disciple Hong Choon succeeded Zhuandao as the abbot of the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See in 1943.[135] Kong Hiap became the resident teacher of Singapore Buddhist Lodge in 1937, and later, assumed the abbacy of Leong San See (*Longshan si* 龍山寺).[136]

The Japanese invasion and subsequent occupation of coastal China disrupted the South China Sea Buddhist networks connecting Xiamen and the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. During the Japanese Occupation of Xiamen, some monks fled with the Kuomintang to Chongqing, others found a new home in Southeast Asia. According to the *Xiamen Buddhist Gazetter*, there were only 78 monastics in the whole of Xiamen during the Japanese occupation.[137] Although the South China Sea networks were briefly revived after the war in 1945, the outbreak of the Chinese Civil War, and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 created an unconducive

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[133] *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 8.
[134] Ibid., 275.
[135] *Hongchuan fashi jinian tekan* 宏船法師紀念特刊 (Singapore: Guangmingshan pujue chansi, 1993), 61; *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 294-295.
[136] Chen Quanzhong 陳全中, "Huayu zhu Nanhai, tabo gui guguo: Guangqia fashi shengping shulue 化雨注南海、塔波歸故國: 廣洽法師生平述略," *Minnan Foxue yuan xuebao* 閩南佛學院學報 20, 2 (1998): 89; *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 295-296.
[137] *Xiamen Fojiao zhi*, 8.

environment for Buddhist activities in China. Accordingly, many Buddhist monks fled China for Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia in the second half of the twentieth century.[138]

Conclusion

Tracing Chinese migration, the spread of Buddhism to maritime Southeast Asia, and the circulation of people, ideas, and resources along the South China Sea Buddhist networks, has set the historical context for subsequent chapters. The overseas Chinese in maritime Southeast Asia contributed to the construction of temples, which in turn led to the arrival of Buddhist monks. By the nineteenth century, Chinese monks served as ritual specialists and performed rituals in temples or at funerals for the Chinese community. The pre-institutional form of Chinese Buddhism in the Malay Archipelago was characterized by the essential role of businessmen in temple building and management, the mix of Buddhism with Confucian and Taoist practices, and the dearth of monks who had the knowledge and intention to propagate the Buddhist doctrine. The last decade of the nineteenth century saw a number of changes, the most obvious being the arrival of missionary monks and the construction of monasteries. The result was the beginning of institutional Buddhism, in which a significant number of monks migrated to maritime Southeast Asia and organized Dharma lectures for the overseas Chinese community.

[138] Ibid., 50.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the institutionalization of Chinese Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia was linked to and enabled by broader events in China. The fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic, coupled with the New Cultural Movement had given rise to a number of modernist monks, who sought to establish seminaries, schools, and orphanages, set up lay Buddhist associations and printing presses, and promote philanthropic activities. Some of these modernist monks such as Zhuanfeng, Huiquan, and Taixu became successive abbots of the Nanputuo Monastery, making Xiamen an important site of Buddhist modernism in South China. Because of its strategic coastal location, Xiamen was both a major port for South China Sea trade, as well as an epicenter for Chinese immigration to Southeast Asia. The South China Sea Buddhist networks facilitated the missionary activities of modernist monks in maritime Southeast Asia, on the one hand, and helped channel the monetary resources from the overseas Chinese to finance the temple building projects and religious activities in South China on the other. When the Sino-Japanese broke out, the transnational Buddhist networks played a crucial role in supporting the fund raising campaign for the Chinese war effort, and later, following the Japanese occupation, assisted Buddhist monks to flee China for Southeast Asia. By the end of the 1940s, there was a larger presence of Buddhist institutions in the Malay Archipelago. Subsequent chapters will demonstrate the development of Buddhism in the region, and the ways in which Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Ashin Jinarakkhita promoted their respective forms of Buddhist modernism in the Chinese diaspora.

CHAPTER 2

"Being Buddhist" in Malaysia: Chuk Mor's Reforms

Many Malaysian Buddhists consider Chuk Mor (Zhumo 竺摩, 1913-2002) the "Father of Malaysia's Chinese Buddhism" (*Malaixiya hanxi fojiao zhi fu* 馬來西亞漢系佛教之父).[1] Born and raised in China, Chuk Mor migrated to Penang in 1954 and remained in Malaysia until his death in 2002. During his five-decade religious career in Malaysia, he served as an advisor to the Phor Tay School (*Puti xueyuan* 菩提學院), founded and served as the inaugural president of the Malaysian Buddhist Association (*Malaixiya fojiao zonghui* 馬來西亞佛教總會), established the Triple Wisdom Hall (*Sanhui jiangtang* 三慧講堂), and initiated the Malaysian Buddhist Institute (*Malaixiya fojiao foxue yuan* 馬來西亞佛學院). In 1998, Chuk Mor became the first Buddhist monk to receive the *Darjah Yang Mulia Pangkuan Negeri* (DMPN) award—which carried the title "Datuk"—from the Supreme Head of the State (*Yang di-Pertua Negeri*) of Penang for his contributions to Buddhism in Malaysia.[2]

When I was conducting research on this monk in Malaysia in the fall of 2014, a Malaysian Chinese friend invited me to a Buddhist music concert.[3] The concert,

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[1] Malaysia was known as Malaya prior to the merger on September 16, 1963. I will use Malaya to refer to the period before 1963 and Malaysia for the period thereafter.
[2] For a brief biography of Chuk Mor, see Chen Xingeng 陳心耕, "Zhugong shilue 竺公史略," in *Huihai mingdeng: Jinian Zhumo zhanglao bainian danchen wenji* 慧海明燈: 紀念竺摩長老百年誕辰文集 (Penang: Triple Wisdom Hall, 2012), 3-9.
[3] I thank Tan Ai Boay for inviting me to attend this concert.

titled "Convergence of the Tides" (*Haichao hui* 海潮匯), named after the theme song of the Young Malaysian Buddhist Association (*Malaixiya fojiao qingnian zonghui* 馬來西亞佛教青年總會), is an annual religious performance put up by the various Buddhist organizations all over Malaysia. It was held in the auditorium of Poi Lam Secondary School (*Peinan zhongxue* 培南中學) in Ipoh, the capital city of Perak state which is approximately two hours to the north of Kuala Lumpur. The 2014 concert, titled "Devotional Singing of the Triple Wisdoms" (*Fanchang sanhui* 梵唱三慧), was a musical performance of poetry and lyrics written by Chuk Mor.[4] According to the concert program, the performance seeks to "propagate the spirit of Venerable Chuk Mor and to remember the elder monk's contributions to the development of Buddhism in Malaysia" (*xuanyang Zhumo zhanglao de jingshen he mianhuai zhanglao dui dama fojiao fazhan de gongxian* 宣揚竺摩長老的精神和緬懷長老對大馬佛教發展的貢獻). [5]

When my friend and I arrived at the concert venue, we were ushered to our seats to await the arrival of the dignitaries. Datuk Seri Venerable Jit Heng (Riheng 日

[4] Triple Wisdom (*sanhui* 三慧, Skt. *trividhā prajñā*) is a Buddhist concept that refers to 1) wisdom obtained from listening to Buddha's teachings (*wenhui* 聞慧); 2) wisdom gained from contemplating the Dharma (*sihui* 思慧); 3) wisdom attained through cultivation and practice (*xiuhui* 修慧). Chuk Mor was the founder of Triple Wisdom Hall, a major Buddhist organization in Penang, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

[5] *2014 nian yibao haichao hui fanchang sanhui Zhumo fashi shici yinyuehui* 2014 年怡保海潮匯梵唱三慧竺摩法師詩詞音樂會. Dir. Zhang Weiqian 張蔚乾, Sekolah Menengah Poi Lam (Suwa), Perak, September 20, 2014, performance.

恆), president of the Malaysian Buddhist Association, officiated the opening of the concert and delivered the opening remarks. He spoke about Chuk Mor's role in the establishment of the Malaysian Buddhist Association, as well as his contributions to the Buddhist community in Malaysia. After several song performances and before the intermission, Venerable Chi Chuan (Jichuan 繼傳), a disciple of Chuk Mor and abbot of the Triple Wisdom Hall, gave a short lecture about the life and times of Chuk Mor.[6] He shared memories of Chuk Mor, and pointed out his teacher's influence on developing Buddhist education, propagating the Dharma, and training young monastics such as himself. In the finale of the concert, all performers appeared on stage to sing "Be At Peace, Chuk Mor" (*Congrong Zhumo* 從容竺摩), a moving song with lyrics written by Venerable Chi Chern (Jicheng 繼程), in memory of his late teacher.[7] The concert was an eye-opener for me. More than a decade after his demise, Chuk Mor appears to remain very much alive in the memory of his disciples and of the Malaysian Chinese Buddhist community in general.

In this chapter, I trace the transnational religious career of Chuk Mor, focusing on his activities and religious spaces in Malaysia in the second half of the twentieth

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[6] I interviewed Venerable Chi Chuan at the Triple Wisdom Hall several weeks prior to the concert. What he shared with me at the interview was pretty similar to his speech delivered at the performance. Venerable Chi Chuan wrote the forward for *Huihai mingdeng*, a souvenir book to commemorate the hundredth birthday of Chuk Mor. See footnote 2.

[7] Venerable Chi Chern was one of the senior disciples of Chuk Mor. After his master passed away in 2002, Venerable Chi Chern became the principal of the Malaysian Buddhist Institute. He was the editor of "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao 竺摩法師簡譜初稿" (A preliminary biographical chronicle of Venerable Chuk Mor), one of the major primary sources cited in this chapter.

century. In doing so, I attempt to present and analyze the development of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia.[8] I argue that Chuk Mor redefined the basis of "being Buddhist" in Malaysia based on the ideas of "Human-life Buddhism" (*rensheng fojiao* 人生佛教), a form of Buddhist modernism that was promoted by Buddhist modernists during the Republican era in China, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Chuk Mor sought to encourage intra-religious conversion by inventing a Malaysian Chinese Buddhist identity that emphasized the this-worldly practice of Buddhism, promotion of an "orthodox" Buddhism (*zhengxin fojiao* 正信佛教), and established new Buddhist spaces for the promotion of religious education. This chapter will reveal how ideas of Buddhist modernism from China were introduced to the Chinese community in Southeast Asia and significantly transformed the religious landscape in postcolonial Malaysia.

A Monk from Mount Yandang: Early Life and Monastic Training

Chuk Mor was born on the thirteenth day of the eighth lunar month in 1913 near the foot of Mount Yandang (*Yandang shan* 雁蕩山) in the Leqing 樂清 county of Zhejiang 浙江 province, China. His given name was Chen De'an 陳德安. He was the seventh child in a family of ten children. When Chuk Mor was ten years old, he studied in a private local school with approximately eighty students. A year later, his

[8] Buddhists oriented towards Chinese-language scriptures and liturgy often considered themselves as followers of "Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism" (*hanchuan dacheng fojiao* 漢傳大乘佛教).

devout Buddhist mother suddenly passed away. After his mother's demise, Chuk Mor and his father often went to Leqing Householder Grove (*Leqing jushi lin* 樂清居士林) to recite the Buddha's name and attend Dharma lectures.[9] The sudden passing of his mother coupled with his pleasant temple-going experiences probably inspired the young Chuk Mor's interest in the Buddhist faith.

One day in 1924, when Chuk Mor was 12, he accompanied his father to attend Venerable Qinhan's 欽漢 Dharma lecture on the *Kṣitigarbha Sūtra* (*Dizang jing* 地藏經) at the Huangtang Shouchang Monastery (*Huangtang Shouchang si* 黃塘壽昌寺). After attending the talk, Chuk Mor decided to become a monk. He received his novice ordination from Venerable Baiyun 白雲, the abbot of Huangtang Shouchang Monastery. Venerable Baiyun gave Chuk Mor the Dharma name Mocheng 默誠 and the courtesy name Shouzhi 守志.[10] After his ordination, Chuk Mor received his monastic training under the guidance of his teacher. Like many newly ordained

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[9] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao 竺摩法師簡譜初稿," narr. Zhumo 竺摩, ed. Jicheng 繼程, in *Dama fojiao yanjiu: diyi ji* 大馬佛教研究: 第一集 [Buddhism in Malaysia: Volume One] (Penang: Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia, 1984), 3.

[10] The name Chuk Mor (Zhumo)—one of his many pen names—was his self-chosen and better-known name. It was inspired by the names of two Indian monks Gobharana (Zhu Falan 竺法蘭) and Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga (She Moteng 攝摩騰) that brought Buddhism to China in the First Century CE. His other pen names include Monk from Yandang (Yandangshan Seng 雁蕩山僧), Weilin 為霖, Tanlun 曇倫, Huisen 慧森, Vastness (Daguang 大廣), Sea of Wisdom (Huihai 慧海), Non-associative (Feifei 非非), Forest of Plum Trees (Meilin 梅林), Endurance (Chanti 羼提), Palmyra Palm (Beiye 貝葉), Master of the Fragrance Incense Studio (Zhuanxiang Shizhu 篆香室主), and Sinner of the Śākya (Shijia Zuiren 釋迦罪人). The name Daguang was given to him by Master Taixu when he received the bodhisattva percepts (*pusa jie* 菩薩戒) in Hong Kong. See "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 3.

novices, Chuk Mor learned to recite the morning and evening prayers and memorized the liturgy. At the same time, Baiyun taught the young novice the "Outline of the Tiantai Fourfold Teachings" (*Tiantai sijiao yi* 天台四教儀).[11]

In 1925, Baiyun sent the thirteen-year-old Chuk Mor to the Yongjia Pujue Monastery (*Yongjia pujue si* 永嘉普覺寺) in Wenzhou 溫州 to be trained under the tutelage of Venerable Zhifeng 芝峯.[12] Chuk Mor served as an attendant of Zhifeng when the elder monk was in a retreat. In return, Zhifeng taught the young novice Chinese classical poetry and lyrics. When the famous artist-turned-monk Hongyi (弘一, 1880-1942) was in Yongjia for a retreat, Venerable Wanding 萬定 brought the young Chuk Mor to pay reverence to the eminent monk. Hongyi was delighted to meet the young monk and offered him candies. He also wrote the four words "Ceasing evil, cultivating compassion" (*xi'e xingci* 息惡行慈) to encourage Chuk Mor on his spiritual journey.[13]

In the spring of 1927, Chuk Mor transferred to study at the Guanzong Monastery (*Guanzong si* 觀宗寺) in Ningbo 寧波 and served as an attendant to the

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[11] Tiantai is one of the major schools in East Asian Buddhism. For studies of Tiantai Buddhism, see, for instance, Paul L. Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism* (Berkeley, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1989) and Brook Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as The Good: Omnicentric Holism, Intersubjectivity and Value Paradox in Tiantai Buddhist Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2000).

[12] Venerable Zhifeng was a disciple of Master Taixu and a Dharma brother of Venerable Baiyun.

[13] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 3.

monastery's abbot Venerable Genhui 根慧. Under the mentorship of the abbot, Chuk Mor studied and memorized the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* (*Fanwang jing* 梵網經) at the Guanzong Monastery. Then one day, Venerable Jingkuan 淨寬 went to Guanzong Monastery to give a guest lecture on the *Brahmajāla Sūtra*. While Venerable Genhui was taking notes during the talk, Chuk Mor whispering the verses mentioned by the speaker to him. The abbot was impressed by Chuk Mor's knowledge of the scripture and told the young novice that after he receives his full ordination in the following year, he will be sent to Guanzong Dharma Propagation Research Society (*Guanzong hongfa yanjiu she* 觀宗弘法研究社) to study the doctrinal thoughts of Tiantai Buddhism.[14]

A year later, a full ordination ceremony was held at Guanzong Monastery to celebrate the seventieth birthday of renowned Tiantai Master Dixian 諦閑. Chuk Mor received his full ordination with Master Dixian as his preceptor. Thereafter, he enrolled at Guanzong Dharma Propagation Research Society to study under Venerable Jingquan 靜權. Chuk Mor's classmates included Venerables Qinghuai 清淮, Xindao 心道, Zhiding 智定, Wei'an 葦菴, Yishan 逸山, and Youxin 又信. Although he was the youngest student in the class, he excelled in his studies, thus earning the nickname "Little Teacher of the Dharma" (*xiao fashi* 小法師).[15]

[14] Ibid., 4
[15] Ibid., 4.

In the summer of 1931, Chuk Mor's former teacher, Venerable Zhifeng, who was then director of academic affairs at the Minnan Buddhist Institute (*Minnan foxue yuan* 閩南佛學院) in Xiamen 廈門, was invited to speak at the Dingguang Monastery (*Dingguang si* 定光寺) in Suzhou 蘇州.[16] After his lectures, Venerable Zhifeng went to Guanzong Monastery to visit Venerable Dixian. He later met with Chuk Mor, and encouraged him to transfer to Minnan Buddhist Institute and to study with Master Taixu 太虛. Chuk Mor accepted the invitation, and a few of months later, was enrolled as a student at the Minnan Buddhist Institute. His classmates at the seminary included Venerables Xindao, Dengxia 燈霞, Yinshun 印順, Dongchu 東初, Zhiyan 志嚴, Dana 大訥, Jingyan 靜嚴, Deqian 德潛, Puqin 普欽, and Youxin; many of them later became eminent monks in their own right.[17] At the institute, Chuk Mor had the opportunity to study with Taixu, Venerable Daxing 大醒, and Venerable Zhifeng and became influenced by Taixu's concept and ideas of Human-life Buddhism. During his time at the Minnan Buddhist Institute, he was active contributor to the seminary's periodicals, *Modern Sangha (Xiandai sengqie* 現代僧伽) and *Modern Buddhism* (*Xiandai fojiao* 現代佛教).[18] He wrote essays on a wide range of topics, including the

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[16] Founded in 1925, Minnan Buddhist Institute was one of the most important Buddhist seminaries in Republican China (1911-49). Taixu was the rector of Minnan Buddhist Institute between 1927 and 1933. For a study on Minnan Buddhist Institute, see Lei Kuan Rongdao Lai, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2013).

[17] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 4.

[18] Venerable Daxing, a disciple of Taixu, founded the *Modern Sangha* periodical in 1928. The journal was renamed *Modern Buddhism* in 1932. According to Lei Kuan Rongdao Lai, the *Modern Sangha* was the "most vocal in advocating modern sangha

importance of training socially engaged reform-minded "modern" sangha,[19] the Triple Gems,[20] the essence of *Tattvasiddhi-śāstra* (*Chengshi lun* 成實論),[21] and Gandhi's comparison of Buddha and Jesus.[22] Chuk Mor's experience at the Minnan Buddhist Institute was vital in the subsequent shaping of his ideas on Human-life Buddhism.

After Chuk Mor graduated from the Minnan Buddhist Institute in 1933, Taixu selected the young monk as his personal attendant for a missionary trip to Chaoshan 潮汕 in the province of Guangdong 廣東. Chuk Mor accompanied the Master for lectures at the Chaozhou Kaiyuan Monastery (*Chaozhou kaiyuan si* 潮州開元寺), Hanjiang Middle School (*Hanjiang zhongxue* 韓江中學), and Shantou Buddhist Association (*Shantou fojiao hui* 汕頭佛教會), and was tasked to take notes of the talks. Subsequently, Chuk Mor's recorded notes were published in *Sound of the Sea Tide* (*Haichao yin* 海潮音), a major Buddhist periodical in Republican China.[23]

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education while criticizing the public monasteries and elder monks for their disinterest in Buddhist modernization projects." See Lai, "Praying for the Republic," 167-168.

[19] Shouzhi 守志, "Quan renlei de huzhu xiancong women sengqie huzhu zuoqi 全人類的互助先從我們僧伽做起," *Xiandai sengqie* 現代僧伽 [Modern Sangha] 4, 4 (1931).

[20] Shouzhi 守志, "Tan sanbao 談三寶," *Xiandai sengqie* 現代僧伽 5, 1 (1932).

[21] Shouzhi 守志, "Chengshi lun gaiyao 成實論概要" *Xiandai sengqie* 現代僧伽 5, 6 (1932).

[22] Shouzhi 守志, "Gandi duiyu fozu he yesu de bijiao 甘地對於佛祖和耶穌的比較," *Xiandai sengqie* 現代僧伽 5, 6 (1932).

[23] See Shouzhi 守志, "Taixu dashi chaoshan hongfa yizhou ji 太虛大師潮汕弘法一週記," *Haichao yin* 海潮音 [*Sound of the Sea Tide*] 14, 1 (1933) and Tanlu 曇倫, "Taixu dashi shuofa hou de chaoshan fojiao 太虛大師說法後的潮汕佛教," *Haichao yin* 海潮音 14, 2 (1933).

After Taixu completed his second term as the rector of Minnan Buddhist Institute in 1933, he returned to Wuchang Buddhist Institute (*Wuchang foxue yuan* 武昌佛學院) in Wuhan 武漢. Chuk Mor followed the Master to Wuhan, and assumed a joint appointment as a researcher at the Wuchang Buddhist Institute and an editor cum translator at the library of the World Buddhist Center (*Shijie foxue yuan tushu guan* 世界佛學苑圖書館).[24] During his time in Wuhan, Chuk Mor published numerous articles in various Buddhist periodicals, such as the *Right Faith* (*Zhengxin* 正信), *Lamp of Society* (*Renhai deng* 人海燈), *Enlightenment of the Human-Realm* (*Renjian jue* 人間覺), and *Sound of the Sea Tide*.[25]

Chuk Mor's education and experiences at Guanzong Dharma Propagation Research Society, Minnan Buddhist Institute, and Wuchang Buddhist Institute were crucial in shaping his religious ideas. He had the opportunity to study under the tutelage of Buddhist modernists such as Taixu, and his colleagues, Daxing and Zhifeng. The young monk was influenced by ideas of Human-life Buddhism and supported Taixu's call to "reform" Buddhism for the modern world. Yet then, perhaps surprisingly, a sudden turn of events brought Chuk Mor to the Chinese periphery.

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[24] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 7.
[25] A list of Chuk Mor's early publications can be found in He Jianming 何建明, "Zhumo fashi yu zhongguo xiandai fojiao 竺摩法師與中國現代佛教," in *Huihai mingdeng*, 20-23.

Buddhism on the Chinese Periphery: Chuk Mor in Hong Kong and Macau

In 1936, Taixu was invited to give a series of talks in Hong Kong and Macau. Macau became a Portuguese colony in the mid-sixteenth century. In 1557, Portugal leased Macau from Ming China as a trading port, and later, in 1887, signed a treaty with the Qing government to continue their occupation and governance of the territory.[26] Hong Kong was ceded to Britain after the First Opium War in 1842. Under British colonial rule, Hong Kong became a prosperous entrepôt on the South China coast. Despite the growing presence of Christianity in Hong Kong and Macau, the majority of the Cantonese-speaking Chinese in the two European colonies adhered to a mix of Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist practices. Like the Chinese in Southeast Asia, Chinese temples were important social center for the Chinese population in Hong Kong and Macau.[27] During China's Republican era, ideas of Buddhist modernism began to spread from Xiamen to the two European colonies.[28] Some lay Buddhists such as Clara Ho Tung (1875-1938), wife of wealthy influential Hong Kong businessman and philanthropist Robert Ho Tung, helped establish Buddhist

[26] Zhidong Hao, *Macau History and Society* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011).
[27] John Mark Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 39-40; Hao, *Macau History and Society*, chapter 5.
[28] See He Jianming 何建明, *Renjian fojiao yu xiandai gang'ao fojiao: Taixu dashi, Zhumo fashi yu gang'ao fojiao (shangce)* 人間佛教與現代港澳佛教: 太虛大師、竺摩法師與港澳佛教 (上冊) (Hong Kong: Xinxin chuban gongsi, 2006), chapters 1-2.

monasteries and free schools for poor children in Hong Kong and Macau in the 1920s.[29]

Taixu requested Chuk Mor to serve as his attendant for his lecture tour in the two European colonies on the Chinese periphery. This trip provided Chuk Mor with the opportunity to meet with prominent monastics and lay Buddhists in Hong Kong and Macau. After returning from his first time visit to Hong Kong and Macau, Chuk Mor resided briefly in White Lake Vihāra (*Baihu jingshe* 白湖精舍) in Zhejiang before going to Siming Yanqing Monastery (*Siming yanqing si* 四明延慶寺) in the spring of 1937. He studied English at the monastery to prepare for his further studies at Taishō University (*Taishō daigaku* 大正大學) in Tokyo later in the year.[30] However, with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in July 1937, Chuk Mor had to abandon his academic plan. The Japanese invaded northern China and quickly occupied Beijing and Tianjin. Over the next few months, the Japanese army seized major cities along the eastern coast, while the Kuomintang retreated inland to Chongqing.

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[29] Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 108; for a biography of Clara Ho Tung, see Irene Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung, a Hong Kong Lady: Her Family and Her Times* (Shatin: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1976).
[30] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 8-9.

Figure 2.1: Chuk Mor (second from left) with Taixu (sixth from left) in Hong Kong, 1936. Photo courtesy of Triple Wisdom Hall.

With the onset of the war, Chuk Mor responded to Taixu's nationalist call, and became a member of the propaganda team (*xuanchuan zu* 宣傳組) in the Cixi Resistance and Reconstruction Logistic Association (*Cixi kangjian houyuan hui* 慈谿抗建後援會). During his missions, he had several close encounters with death during air raids. As the Japanese advanced and captured major cities in North and Central China in the early months of 1938, Chuk Mor and his colleague, Venerable Huiyun 慧雲, decided to flee south to Hong Kong. They first boarded a train to Guangzhou, and from there took another train to Hong Kong. When Chuk Mor and Huiyun arrived in

Hong Kong, they realized that Guangzhou had just fallen to the Japanese.[31] Little did Chuk Mor realize that a string of events would cause him to spend the next decade of his religious career in Hong Kong and the neighboring island of Macau.

In Hong Kong, Chuk Mor served in the Hong Kong Buddhist Refugee Relief Association (*Xianggang fojiao jiuji nanmin hui* 香港佛教救濟難民會) to provide welfare relief to war refugees. During his spare time, he contributed articles about his relief work and his war experience to the *Ta Kung Pao* (*Dagong bao* 大公報) newspaper and to *Cosmic Wind* (*Yuzhou feng* 宇宙風) magazine. Chuk Mor expanded his social networks during his time in Hong Kong, becoming acquainted with prominent journalists Xiao Qian 蕭乾 and Tao Kangde 陶亢德, as well as authors, Xu Dishan 許地山, Ye Lingfeng 葉靈鳳, Xiao Jun 蕭軍, and Xiao Hong 蕭紅. The editors of *Ta Kung Pao* invited Chuk Mor to participate in their Resistance and National Salvation Literary Assembly (*Kangzhan jiuguo wenyi dahui* 抗戰救國文藝大會).[32]

A year later, Chuk Mor was invited to set up a Buddhist Studies research class (*foxue yanjiu ban* 佛學研究班) at Merit Grove (*Gongde lin* 功德林) in Macau. There, he taught the *Thirty Verses on the Vijñapti-mātra Treatise* (*Sanshi weishi lun* 三十唯識論), *Large Commentary on Logic* (*Yinming dashu* 因明大疏), and *Sūtra on*

[31] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 9.
[32] Ibid., 9.

Understanding Profound and Esoteric Doctrine (*Jie shenmi jing* 解深密經) to some ten students. Chuk Mor also assumed the editorship of a monthly periodical *Voice of Awakening* (*Jueyin* 覺音). During his tenure, Chuk Mor ran a number of nationalistic articles relating to national and global salvation (*jiuguo jiushi* 救國救世), as well as on Buddhist arts and culture. His growing reputation in both the religious and cultural spheres allowed him to get to know renowned writers and artists, such as Gao Jianfu 高劍父, Gao Qifeng 高奇峰, and Chen Shuren 陳樹人.[33] Subsequently, Chuk Mor studied painting and calligraphy techniques with Gao Jianfu.[34]

Between 1939 and 1942, Chuk Mor spent his time in Macau teaching Buddhism, editing a periodical, and studying traditional Chinese art. Then in 1943, he received a letter from his former teachers, Zhifeng and Daxing, requesting him to return to mainland China. However, the fall of Hong Kong to the Japanese coupled with constant air raids prevented Chuk Mor from traveling north to mainland China. Consequently, he remained in Macau until the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1945.[35]

After the Sino-Japanese War ended, Chuk Mor returned to mainland China. The close of the war, however, did not bring peace to China. The Chinese Civil War

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[33] Gao Jianfu, his brother Gao Qifeng, and friend Chen Shuren, were three prominent artists from the so-called Lingnan 嶺南 (Cantonese) school of painting. See Ralph C. Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: The Lingnan (Cantonese) School of Painting, 1906-1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
[34] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 10.
[35] Ibid, 10-12.

(1946-50) soon broke out between the Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party. Despite the political instability and unrest, Chuk Mor remained in China for the next two years until 1948 when he received an invitation from a lay Buddhist, Yin Faxian 尹法顯, to assist in setting up the Macau Buddhist Society (*Aomen foxue she* 澳門佛學社). Little is known about Yin Faxian's life except that he was a prominent Buddhist leader in Macao. During his teaching tenure at Merit Grove a few years ago, Chuk Mor became acquainted with Yin Faxian. He accepted Yin's request and returned to Macau to become the advisor of the Buddhist society.[36]

With the Communist Party's victory and the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, many overseas Chinese monks feared communist hostility towards religion, and hence decided against returning to mainland China.[37] Chuk Mor too decided to remain in Macau. He gave regular lectures at the Buddhist society, and published two books based on his sermons, titled *Lectures on the Kṣitigarbha Sūtra* (*Dizang jing jianghua* 地藏經講話) and *Lectures on the Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing jianghua* 金剛經講話).[38] In 1951, Chuk Mor founded a periodical, *Inexhaustible Lamp* (*Wujin deng* 無盡燈), to promote Buddhism. The magazine soon became widely circulated in Macau and Hong Kong, as well as among the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. In the following year, Chuk Mor relocated to Sarnath

[36] Ibid., 13.
[37] For a study of Buddhism in Mao China, see Holmes Welch, *Buddhism under Mao* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1972).
[38] The two books have been republished in his 26-volume collected works, *Complete Works from the Fragrance Incense Studio* (*Zhuanxiang huashi wenji* 篆香畫室文集). See Appendix 2.

Temple (*Luye yuan* 鹿野苑) in Hong Kong and shifted the production office of the magazine to Happy Valley (*Paoma di* 跑馬地) on the island. He then assembled a team to assist him with the production and distribution of the periodical. While Venerables Chaochen 超塵 and Longgen 隆根 helped with the editorial work, Venerable Songquan 松泉 took charge of the distribution.[39] A year later, Venerable Mingchang 明常 established Qixia Buddhist Institute (*Qixia foxue yuan* 棲霞佛學院) and invited Chuk Mor to serve as the director of academic affairs. Chuk Mor taught at the Qixia Buddhist for a year before making his next big move to Southeast Asia in 1954.

In his study of Buddhism in Hong Kong and Macau, He Jianming 何建明 points out that Chuk Mor was a "famous personality" in the history of Buddhism in modern Hong Kong and Macau.[40] Chuk Mor taught Buddhism, engaged in dialogues with intellectuals and social elites, and participated in the local art scene during his decade-long residence during the time of the Sino-Japanese War from 1938 to 1945, and again between 1948 and 1954. His missionary activities earned him respect in the

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[39] When Chuk Mor migrated to Malaysia, he brought the publication of the magazine with him. Subsequently, *Inexhaustible Lamp* became the official magazine of the Malaysian Buddhist Association in 1959 and continues to be published to this day. For a discussion of *Inexhaustible Lamp* magazine in Hong Kong and Macau, see He Jianming 何建明, *Renjian fojiao yu xiandai gang'ao fojiao: Taixu dashi, Zhumo fashi yu gang'ao fojiao (xiace)* 人間佛教與現代港澳佛教: 太虛大師、竺摩法師與港澳佛教 (下冊) (Hong Kong: Xinxin chuban gongsi, 2006), chapter 9.

[40] He Jianming 何建明, *Renjian fojiao yu xiandai gang'ao fojiao: Taixu dashi, Zhumo fashi yu gang'ao fojiao (shangce)* 人間佛教與現代港澳佛教: 太虛大師、竺摩法師與港澳佛教 (上冊) (Hong Kong: Xinxin chuban gongsi, 2006), 207.

Buddhist, literary, and artistic community. More importantly, He Jianming suggests that Chuk Mor transformed the image of Buddhism from a ritualistic religion for the lower classes to a modern, rational faith that was attractive to the intellectuals and social elites.[41] As we shall see later in this chapter, Chuk Mor was determined to promote Human-life Buddhism based on his vision of "orthodoxy" and "right faith." For these reasons, Venerable Jueguang (覺光, 1919-2014), who arrived in Hong Kong a year after Chuk Mor in 1939 and subsequently became first president of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association (*Xianggang fojiao lianhe hui* 香港佛教聯合會), called Chuk Mor the "first propagator of the Dharma in modern Hong Kong and Macau" (*xiandai gang'ao hongfa diyi ren* 現代港澳弘法第一人).[42]

I suggest that Chuk Mor's experiences in Hong Kong and Macau were crucial in shaping his subsequent career in Malaysia for two reasons. First, Chuk Mor's stint in the Chinese periphery provided him the opportunity to teach and promote Buddhism in a foreign environment with a large non-mandarin speaking Chinese population. Although Chuk Mor could not communicate in Cantonese dialect to the Cantonese-speaking majority, he was able to overcome the linguistic barrier and worked well with the local Buddhist community in Hong Kong and Macau. With this valuable experience under his belt, Chuk Mor was able to spread Buddhist teachings among the Hokkien-speaking Chinese community in Penang even though he could

[41] Ibid., chapter 4.
[42] See He Jianming's interview with Venerable Jueguang 覺光 in He, *Renjian fojiao (xiace)*, chapter 11.

barely speak any Hokkien. Second, having studied under and been influenced by Taixu's teachings of Human-life Buddhism, Chuk Mor became a firm believer and ardent promoter of these new religious ideas. He claimed that his wartime experience and involvement in the relief efforts further made him comprehend that "the Buddha-dharma should not be disengaged from this-worldly existence" (*fofa buli shijian fa* 佛法不離世間法).[43] This made him determined to spread Human-life Buddhism to the overseas Chinese community in Southeast Asia. Malaysia soon became a new base for him to disseminate his ideas of Buddhist modernism.

Spreading Dharma Across the South China Sea: Chuk Mor Comes to Malaya

In 1954, Chuk Mor came to Southeast Asia for the first time. The reasons behind his journey to Southeast Asia could be attributed to his relationship with Taixu. As Holmes Welch points out, loyalty to charismatic monks such as Taixu, created a network of affiliations between Buddhist clergy.[44] This was indeed true for Chuk Mor's case. A few years prior, Venerable Fafang (法舫, 1904-1951), a disciple of Taixu and alumnus of Wuchang Buddhist Institute, studied and taught Buddhism in India and Ceylon. In 1946, Fafang stopped in Malaya and Singapore en route to China. The monk became acquainted with the Buddhist community in Penang and was invited to give several talks during his stay. In 1950, Fafang was again invited to attend the opening ceremony of the new campus of Phor Tay School and to consecrate

[43] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 9.
[44] Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 404.

the school's new shrine hall. This time, he stopped by Penang on his way to Sri Lanka to assume a teaching position at Vidyodaya Pirivena, a Buddhist seminary in Ceylon.[45] The Buddhist community in Penang urged Fafang to become an advisor (*daoshi* 導師) of Phor Tay School. The monk agreed to return to teach in Penang at the end of his four-year teaching contract in Ceylon.[46] In his autobiographical essay, Chuk Mor mentioned that Fafang had invited him to join him in Penang after his teaching stint in Ceylon.[47] According to Venerable Weiwu 唯悟, the chairman of the Phor Tay School board, Fafang nominated Chuk Mor as a potential candidate to serve as an advisor for Phor Tay School in the event that he was unable to do so.[48] Unfortunately, a year later, Fafang unexpectedly passed away in Ceylon at the age of forty-eight.

The Phor Tay School was the oldest Buddhist school in British Malaya. It was founded in 1935 by Bhikkhunī Fanglian 芳蓮, a Chinese migrant nun from Xiamen 廈門, with the objectives of promoting Buddhism, taking care of orphans, and offering Buddhist education. After the nun passed away in 1937, the local Buddhist community

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[45] Vidyodaya Pirivena was an important institution for Buddhist education in colonial Lanka. For a discussion of Vidyodaya Pirivena, see Anne M. Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism: Colonialism and Modernity in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), chapter 2.

[46] Shi Kaidi 釋開諦, *Nanyou yunshui qing: Fojiao dade honghua xingma jishi* 南遊雲水情: 佛教大德弘化星馬記事 (Penang: Poh Oo Toong Temple, 2010), 150-153.

[47] Chuk Mor, *Xingjiao guo qianqiu* 行腳過千秋 (Penang: Triple Wisdom Hall Dharma Publication, 2003), 20.

[48] Shi Weiwu 釋唯悟, interview by author, Penang, September 24, 2014.

continued to run the school under the leadership of Chen Kuanzong 陳寬宗.[49] Aw Boon Haw (Hu Wenhu 胡文虎, 1882-1954) and his young brother, Aw Boon Par (Hu Wenbao 胡文豹, 1888-1944), two wealthy overseas Chinese businessmen best known for introducing Tiger Balm medicated ointment whom I mentioned in the previous chapter, made generous contributions to expand the school. In April 1950, an opening ceremony was held to celebrate the opening of the new campus of Phor Tay School. With the expansion of the school, the school management board saw the need to appoint a senior monk to serve as a school advisor and write a new Buddhist Studies curriculum for the students. After the death of Fafang, Chuk Mor was deemed an ideal candidate for the position. The monk was already a familiar name among the Buddhist community in Penang because of his widely circulated magazine *Inexhaustible Lamp*. Therefore, in 1953, the Phor Tay School management board under the leadership of Chen Kuanzong and Wang Nongshu 王弄書, extended their invitation to Chuk Mor to become an advisor of the Buddhist school. Chuk Mor accepted the offer and would make his way to Penang in the following year.[50]

In the spring of 1954, Chuk Mor at the age of forty-two, embarked on his journey to Penang. Earlier on, he was invited by the Dragon-Flower Buddhist Society (*Longhua foxue she* 龍華佛學社) in Siam to participate in the installation ceremony of Taixu's relics. Chuk Mor decided to stop in Bangkok for two weeks en route to

[49] *Bingcheng puti chuangxiao qishi zhounian jinian tekan* 檳城菩提創校七十週年紀念特刊 (Penang, 2010), 32.
[50] *Wang Nongshu jushi shishi wushi zhounian jinian tekan* 王弄書居士逝世五十週年紀念特刊 (Taipei: Taibei shi wenshan caiyi youxian gongsi, 2014) 128-129.

Penang. The overseas Chinese community in Siam warmly received the visiting monk and invited him to lecture on the *Sūtra of Maitreya's Ascension* (*Mile shangsheng jing* 彌勒上生經) and the *Heart Sūtra* (*Xinjing* 心經). During his time in Bangkok, Chuk Mor had an audience with the Supreme Patriarch (*Sangharaja*) of Siam, met with several senior Siamese monks, and visited numerous famous temples in the country. In addition, he seized the opportunity to hold a personal art exhibition. Chuk Mor's paintings were well received and quickly found buyers. For instance, Li Zhijin 李之錦, a collector from Bangkok, bought seven of his paintings.[51]

On May 4, 1954, Chuk Mor arrived in Penang to assume the position of the advisor cum lecturer of Phor Tay School. A day later, the overseas Chinese community in Penang, consisting of the Buddhist community led by Venerable Zhikun 志崑 and Wang Nongshu, education community leaders such as Guan Zhenmin 管震民, as well as the arts community led by Luo Qingquan 駱清泉, hosted a welcome reception for Chuk Mor. Additionally, over a hundred teachers and students from the Phor Tay School attended the function. At the reception, the monk gave a talk titled "Three Main Points of the Buddha-dharma" (*Fofa de san yaodian* 佛教的三要點). He was "deeply touched" by the warm welcome accorded to him.[52] This marked the beginning of his five-decade religious long career in Southeast Asia.

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[51] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 14. Chuk Mor's account of his travels to Southeast Asia was published in a book titled *Nanyou jiyu* 南遊記語 (Hong Kong: Xianggang wujin deng she, 1956).
[52] Chuk Mor, *Xingjiao guo qianqiu*, 20.

When Chuk Mor arrived in Penang in 1954, the island with a large Chinese population was a part of British Malaya.[53] As discussed in the previous chapter, Chinese immigration to Malaya since the nineteenth century had contributed to the construction of numerous Chinese temples and Buddhist monasteries in the British colony. According to the 1947 Census for British Malaya and Singapore, Buddhism, Taoism, and Chinese folk religion were lumped together into a category known as "Chinese National Religion" that made up approximately 2.5 million of the Malayan population (see Table 1).[54] This categorization can be attributed to two reasons. First, British census administrators were probably more interested to formulate the ethnic classifications of colonial subjects in Malaya than to investigate the differences between Buddhist, Taoist, and folk religious beliefs among the Chinese community.[55] Consequently, colonial census takers conveniently essentialized the varied forms of Chinese religious practices into a monolithic "Chinese National Religion."

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[53] For a study of the Chinese in Penang, see Jean DeBernardi, *Rites of Belonging: Memory, Modernity, and Identity in a Malaysian Chinese Community* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[54] According to Colin McDougall, "although the word 'Buddhist' does not appear, the term 'Chinese National Religion' certainly includes an enormous number of people who at some time or other during their lives claim Buddhism as their religion." See Colin McDougall, *Buddhism in Malaya* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1956), 33.

[55] For a study of British census classification in colonial Malaya, see Charles Hirschman, "The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia: An Analysis of Census Classifications," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, 3 (1987): 555-581.

Religion	**Estimated Figures**
Mohammedans (Muslims)	Approximately 2,500,000
Chinese National Religion (Buddhists + Taoists + Chinese Popular Religion)	” 2,500,000
Hindus	” 500,000
Christians	” 120,000
Sikhs	” 18,000
Pagans	” 35,000
Others	” 31,000

Table 1: 1947 Census for Malaya and Singapore.

Source: McDougall, *Buddhism in Malaya*, 33.

Second, “Buddhism” was not an exclusive religious identity for the overseas Chinese in Malaya. With the emergence of institutional Buddhism in Malaya, majority of the Chinese population identified themselves as “Buddhists,” but continued to venerate a variety of Taoist gods and local Chinese deities, and engaged in ancestor worship. Chen Qiuping 陳秋平, for instance, in his study of Buddhism in Penang, points out that Buddhists knew little about Buddhist doctrines and simply considered Buddhism a so-called “pray pray” (*baibai* 拜拜) religion. He suggests that the lack of qualified Buddhist monastic and lay teachers was one of the main reasons for this

religious trend.[56] Venerable Chi Chuan reveals in an interview that the majority of the Buddhists in those days "could not distinguish between gods and the Buddha" (*shenfo bufen* 神佛不分), and believed that the "more deities they worshipped, the more blessings they would receive" (*baide shenduo, shen baoyou* 拜的神多, 神保佑). [57] Moreover, Buddhism was often associated with funerary rites (*jingchan foshi* 經懺佛事) and regarded as a religion for the dead and bereaved.[58] For these reasons, Chuk Mor considered the reform of Buddhism as his "personal mission" and attempted to create a new Malaysian Chinese Buddhist identity based on the ideas of Human-life Buddhism.[59]

Chuk Mor arrived in Malaya during a time of major political and social change. During that period, the British were on the gradual path towards the decolonization of Malaya.[60] A year after his arrival, Venerable Jinxing 金星 from Malacca visited Chuk Mor and requested him to establish a Buddhist national organization to represent the Buddhist community in Malaya. Chuk Mor thanked Jinxing for his suggestion, but turned down his invitation. He felt that the foundation of Buddhism in Malaya was weak and it would be too much work for him to start a

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[56] Chen Qiuping 陳秋平, *Yimin yu fojiao: Ying zhimin shidai de bingcheng fojiao* 移民與佛教: 英殖民時代的檳城佛教 (Johor: Nanfang xueyuan 2004), 145.
[57] Shi Chi Chuan, interview by author, Penang, September 9, 2014.
[58] Chuk Mor, "Duiyu 'jingchan foshi' de xingujia 對於「經懺佛事」的 新估價," in *Fojiao shishi ganyan* 佛教時事感言 (Penang: Triple Wisdom Dharma Publication, 1991), 60-61.
[59] Shi Chi Chern, interview by author, Penang, September 29, 2014; Shi Chi Chuan, interview by author, Penang, September 9, 2014.
[60] A.J. Stockwell, "British Imperial Policy and Decolonization in Malaya, 1942-52," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 13, 1 (1984): 68-87.

national organization. Furthermore, given his recent arrival in Malaya, Chuk Mor wanted to devote more time to teaching and writing, rather than to assume administrative leadership of a nationwide organization.[61]

Following the independence of Malaya in 1957, the Federal Constitution specifies Islam, the religion of the ethnic Malay majority, as the official religion of the Federation.[62] Although Islam is considered the religion of the country under Article 3 of the Constitution, Article 11 guarantees the freedom of religion.[63] After Malaya's independence, Buddhist leaders such as Chuk Mor, Jinxing 金星, Jinming 金明, Zhikun 志崑, and Shengjin 勝進 recognized the urgent need to establish a national Buddhist association to represent the minority Buddhist community in a Malay-Muslim majority state. Subsequently, the Malaysian Buddhist Association was officially established on April 19, 1959 at the Kek Lok Si in Penang in the presence of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman (1903-1990).[64] Chuk Mor was elected as the inaugural president and played a crucial role in expanding the organization. During his tenure as the president of the Malaysian Buddhist Association, he established branch

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[61] Chuk Mor, *Xingjiao guo qianqiu*, 26.

[62] Joseph M. Fernando, "The Position of Islam in the Constitution of Malaysia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 37, 02 (June 2006): 249-266; Joseph Chiyong Liow, *Piety and Politics: Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[63] According to the Federal Constitution, Islam is the religion of the Federation. However, every person has the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion in Malaysia. See *Federation Constitution* (Kuala Lumpur: The Commissioner of Law Revision, Malaysia, 2010).

[64] Tunku Abdul Rahman was the first Chief Minister of the Federation of Malaya from 1955 to 1957. He became Malaya's first Prime Minister after independence in 1957, and remained Prime Minister following the formation of Malaysia in 1963 until his retirement in 1970.

offices of the association in various parts of Malaysia, initiated the refuge taking ceremony movement, and founded the first Buddhist seminary in the country, which we will learn more later in the chapter.[65]

Figure 2.2: Chuk Mor (first from left) and Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman (third from left) at the founding of the Malaysian Buddhist Association at Kek Lok Si in Penang, 1959. Photo courtesy of Triple Wisdom Hall.

[65] *Malaixiya fojiao zonghui 50 zhounian tekan* 馬來西亞佛教總會 50 週年特刊 (Penang: Malaysian Buddhist Association, 2009), 34-36.

Human-Life Buddhism in the Chinese Diaspora

Chuk Mor's arrival brought doctrinal innovation to the Buddhist community in Malaysia. Having studied under and been influenced by Taixu's ideas of Buddhist modernism, Chuk Mor was a strong advocate of Human-life Buddhism.[66] Therefore, he saw the need to promote a new form of this-worldly Buddhism to the Malaysian Buddhist community. Chuk Mor's vision of Human-life Buddhism could be summarized into three principles: first, making Buddhism relevant to this-worldly life; second, practicing an exclusive orthodox, right faith Buddhism; and third, encouraging Buddhists to take refuge in the Triple Gems.

First and foremost, one of the major goals of Human-life Buddhism was to make Buddhism a religion relevant to the modern world. Chuk Mor was against the prevalent stereotype that associated Buddhism with death and funeral rites. In *Buddhism and Human-life* (*Fojiao yu rensheng* 佛教與人生), a volume based on a collection of lectures delivered on Human-life Buddhism, Chuk Mor spoke extensively about the relevance of Buddhism to modern society and the importance of putting faith in one's daily life. He delivered a sermon titled "Human Life and Buddhism" (*rensheng yu fojiao* 人生與佛教) at the Malaysian Buddhist Association's weekly lecture in 1965 to highlight that Buddhism is a religion for the living rather than for the dead:

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[66] Xia Meiyu 夏美玉, "Taixu dashi dui Zhumo fashi zhi yinxiang yu qifa" 太虛大師對竺摩法師之音響與啟發," *Xinjiyuan xueyuan xuebao* 新紀元學院 3 (July 2006): 29-61.

> The topic I now want to talk about is "Buddhism and Human Life." If someone asks me, why not talk about Buddhism and death instead of Buddhism and life? Let me begin by asking everyone present: who wants to die? I believe everyone wants to live and not want to die. Therefore, I will talk about human life and not human death. At the same time, the Buddha was born in the human-realm, and attained enlightenment and taught the Dharma in the human-realm. Therefore, Buddhism was founded for the needs of the living, and not established for the dying and deceased. Naturally, I now want to lecture about Buddhism for the living and not Buddhism for the dead.[67]

Chuk Mor was less concerned with the Buddhist teachings on death or transcendent salvation. On the contrary, his idea of Buddhist modernism was to highlight that the practice of Buddhism could bring happiness to one's present life. In another lecture, the monk explained that Buddhists should not indulge in mundane happiness, but ought to strive for the highest form of happiness in accordance to the Buddha's teachings to improve their lives:

> Happiness, is what a human-life longs for [and] seeks to pursue. [One who is] learning the Buddha[dharma] is also looking forward to

[67] Chuk Mor, "Fojiao yu rensheng 佛教與人生," in *Fojiao yu rensheng* 佛教與人生 (Penang: Triple Wisdom Hall Dharma Publication, 2003), 44.

> happiness in life and pursuing happiness in life. This is because the goal of learning the Buddha[dharma] is to "transform delusion into enlightenment, [and] cease sufferings to achieve happiness" (*zhuanmi weiwu, liku dele* 轉迷為悟, 離苦得樂); however, [one who is] learning the Buddha[dharma] pursuits longs for the highest happiness in life. [This is] not the happiness from sensual profits and vulgar entertainment that ordinary people desire. These happiness are illusionary and unreal, impermanent [and] cannot be sustained. Therefore, [one who is] learning the Buddha[dharma] does not pay attention to [these happiness].[68]

In a sermon titled "Who is the Most Reliable in Life" (*Rensheng shui zui kekao* 人生誰最可靠) delivered in Ipoh in 1966, Chuk Mor argued that a human-life should not merely rely on ego, wealth, fame, relatives and friends, society, fortune telling, geomancy, and gods and ghosts.[69] Rather, he taught that a person can live a more meaningful life by depending on the right understanding of Karma (*yinguo* 因果), self-reliance (*zili* 自力), and true wisdom (*zhenzhi* 真智) acquired from the Buddha's teachings:

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[68] Chuk Mor, "Rensheng kuaile de zhuiqiu 人生快樂的追求," in *Fojiao yu rensheng*, 70.

[69] Chuk Mor, "Rensheng shui zui kekao 人生誰最可靠," in *Fojiao yu rensheng*, 12-20.

> We must know that by relying on Karma, that is to obtain a right understanding of Karma. However, the belief in fate [and] the belief in geomancy are not the correct places to seek refuge. [One] must know self-reliance and not depend on the divine; relying on society, relying on friends, relying on money, relying on fame, and so on, are also not perfect methods. By relying on true wisdom [and] not relying on false knowledge, we will then realize that the habitual deluded mind and mundane activities are all without a place. [We] need to obtain real understanding and penetrating views from the Buddha-dharma, end confusion [and] realize emptiness, [we] will then be able to discover a new continent in the real world![70]

Second, Chuk Mor had a particular vision of orthodox, right faith Buddhism, which he claimed, was found in the Buddhist scriptures. His interpretation of orthodoxy was informed by Human-life Buddhism and a fundamentalist interpretation of the Buddhist doctrines. Therefore, Chuk Mor was very critical of Buddhist beliefs and practices that could not be found in the scriptures.[71] In his book *Questions and Answers on Buddhist Studies* (*Foxue wenda* 佛學問答), which was based on questions

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[70] Ibid., 20.

[71] Tan Lee Ooi discusses the term "*zhengxin*" 正信 (which I translate as "orthodox, right faith Buddhism") in the Malaysian Chinese Buddhist context, and suggests that the first generation of Chinese Mahayanist monks that migrated to Malaya in the 1950s began to use the term *Zhengxin* in their writings. However, he did not further explore the role of Chuk Mor in the promotion of *zhengxin* Buddhism. See Tan Lee Ooi, "The Making of Modern Buddhism: Chinese Buddhist Revitalization in Malaysia" (PhD diss., National University of Singapore, 2013), chapter 3.

that Buddhists in Malaysia and Singapore asked about the Buddha's teachings, Chuk Mor was determined to educate Buddhists against mixing Buddhism with uncanonical religious practices. He pointed out that in his opinion, Chinese deities are "petty gods" (*xiaoshen* 小神) which Buddhists do not need to worship:

> Question: What are "Heaven God" (*Tiangong cifu* 天宮賜福) and "Kitchen God" (*Siming dijun* 司命帝君)? Is it necessary to worship them?
>
> Answer (Chuk Mor): Heaven God and Kitchen God are petty gods from Chinese folk [religion]… For these kinds of good gods (*shanshen* 善神), it is fine to respect them, but unnecessary to worship.[72]

In another instance, Chuk Mor asserted that the worship of Taoist and Chinese local deities, as well as various forms of Chinese religious customs such as fortune telling and spirit mediumship, were not within the scope of orthodox Buddhism. He considered these "distorted" Buddhist beliefs a product of Chinese popular customs and highlighted the need to eradicate such erroneous traditions:

> Question: "Buddhism" in many places in the present-day seems to be a jumble of Taoism, or "non-Taoism and non-Buddhism" (*feidao feifo* 非道非佛), and is associated with the images of the Monkey God (*Qitian*

[72] Chuk Mor, *Foxue wenda* 佛學問答 (Penang: Triple Wisdom Dharma Publication, 1991), 26.

> *dasheng* 齊天大聖), Nine Emperor Gods (*Jiu huangye* 九皇爺), Supreme Lord Lao (*Taishang laojun* 太上老君), Lord Guan (*Guandi* 關帝), Goddess Avalokiteśvara (*Guanyin niangniang* 觀音娘娘), Empress of Heaven (*Tianhou* 天后)…; in addition, [devotees] use incense, candles, and joss papers; burn talisman and request oracle sticks (*qiuqian* 求籤); and engage in fortune telling and spirit mediumship. Are these considered to be within the scope of Buddhism?
>
> Answer: With the exception of Avalokiteśvara, all these [deities] are not within the scope of Buddhism. Furthermore, Avalokiteśvara had been transformed into a "goddess" (*niangniang* 娘娘), [which is] distorted (*zouyang* 走樣)! Chinese popular customs have accumulated for a long time and are hard to eradicate, and for that [I] sigh deeply![73]

Finally, Chuk Mor staunchly believed that a Buddhist must take refuge in the Triple Gems (*guiyi sanbao* 皈依三寶)—Buddha (*fo* 佛), Dharma (*fa* 法), and Sangha (*seng* 僧)—to be considered a true follower of the religion. During the Republican period in China, committed lay Buddhists who had formally taken refuge in the Triple Gems made up only 1 percent of the population.[74] Therefore, Taixu taught that Buddhists should take refuge in the Triple Gems and promoted refuge taking as part of

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[73] Ibid, 42.
[74] Don A. Pittman, *Towards a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 53.

his modernist project.[75] Influenced by his teacher's ideas of refuge taking, Chuk Mor observed that many Buddhist laity in Malaysia had not taken refuge in the Triple Gems and were unaware of this religious injunction. Therefore, during his tenure as the president of the Malaysian Buddhist Association, Chuk Mor initiated a "refuge taking movement" (*guiyi yundong* 皈依運動) for the laity. The refuge taking movement was introduced at the Fourth General Meeting of the Malaysian Buddhist Association in 1971. Chuk Mor explained three reasons for the introduction of the refuge taking campaign. First, he considered refuge taking as an important action "to establish the fundamentals of faith" (*jianli xinyang de genben* 建立信仰的根本). He reasoned that taking refuge in the Triple Gems is the foundation of Buddhist faith. If a devotee does not take refuge in the Triple Gems, he cannot be considered a "Buddhist with orthodox and right faith" (*zhengxin fojiao tu* 正信佛教徒).[76]

Chuk Mor regarded the refuge taking ceremony as a rite of passage "to ascertain one's identity as a believer" (*queding xintu shenfen* 確定信徒身分). He pointed out that all Buddhists must have undergone the refuge taking ceremony at least once in their lifetime. He cited the *Āgama* (*Ahan jing* 阿含經) to make a historical claim that the refuge taking ceremony could be dated back to the Buddha's time whereby lay believers recited "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha" (*Namo fo, Namo fa, Namo seng* 南無佛、南無

[75] See Ibid., 205-206.
[76] Chuk Mor, "Mafozong tuixing 'guiyi yundong' 馬佛總推行「皈依運動」," *Fojiao shishi ganyan*, 79-80.

法、南無僧) before the Buddha and his bhikkhus to confirm their identity as Buddhists.[77] Interestingly, the monk even equated the status of a citizen to that of a Buddhist identity:

> Some people thought that having faith in the Buddha is already sufficient. Why take refuge [in the Triple Gems]? They are not aware that taking refuge is a testimony of confirming one's identity as a Buddhist. For instance, for us residing in Malaysia, you can definitely stay here if you are a citizen and you can also stay here if [you are] a noncitizen. However, although a noncitizen can reside [in Malaysia], [he] will not receive the assurance and benefits [that citizens enjoy] as stated in the country's constitution. This is the same for Buddhism. If you do not take refuge, can you believe [in Buddhism]? Naturally you can, but without a confirmed identity [as a Buddhist], [you] will not obtain many protections and benefits, as well as accelerate in the cultivation of goodness.[78]

Lastly, Chuk Mor emphasized the "welfare of taking refuge in the Triple Gems" (*guiyi sanbao de fuli* 皈依三寶的福利). He suggested that there are four benefits to taking refuge: self-blessing (*zili defu* 自力得福) from merit accumulation; other-power protection (*tali huyou* 他力護佑) from the Buddha and bodhisattvas, as

[77] Ibid., 80.
[78] Ibid., 80-81.

well as thirty-six good deities (*shanshen* 善神); benefits for one's children (*zinü mengyi* 子女蒙益); and goodness for the society (*shehui huoli* 社會獲利).[79] The final benefit deserves a closer examination. According to Chuk Mor,

> Promoting the refuge taking movement not only requires one to have faith in the Buddha-dharma and obtain merits for oneself. At the same time, it also contributes to social stability and benefits others. For instance, the current social atmosphere is bad, public safety is not good, and the reason is because there are too few people that adhere to moral principles. The majority of the people were influenced by Western material civilization (*xifang wuzhi wenhua* 西方物質文明) and became obsessed with material possessions. [Their] minds are filled with desire for profits, [they] have no shame, and [they] are willful with no fear. Consequently, the society will be in chaos, and the human body will experience sufferings. If a majority of the people can take refuge in the Triple Gems, accept the Buddhist culture of compassion and no-self, focus on the faith in the spiritual and cultural, and pay attention to the practice of morality, the society can find peace without control (*buzhi er'an* 不治而安), and mankind can reduce many sufferings that are caused by non-compliance with order and competitive rivalry.[80]

[79] Ibid., 81-82.
[80] Ibid, 82.

Chuk Mor's claim seemed exaggerated on several counts. On the one hand, he created an East-West dichotomy in his understanding of social issues. He simply attributed the cause of material obsession, low morality, and social problems to Western civilization. In other words, the monk asserted that if one adheres to Western culture, the society would experience "chaos" and "sufferings." On the other hand, Chuk Mor claimed that Buddhism offers a one-size-fits-all solution to social ills. He supposed that if majority of the people had taken refuge in the Triple Gems, they would automatically adhere to moral principles and contribute to the goodness of the society. Taken together, one can consider this as Chuk Mor's "marketing strategy" to sell the idea of refuge taking and justify his religious campaign.

Chuk Mor's refuge taking movement was a watershed in the history of Buddhism in Malaysia. The refuge taking ceremony can be regarded as a public profession of faith akin to the Christian baptism and the Muslim *shahada* ceremony. Essentially, the taking refuge movement was an intra-religious conversion campaign to convert Malaysian Buddhists into so-called orthodox right-faith believers. As the president of the Malaysian Buddhist Association, Chuk Mor was able to draw upon his networks and status to promote a national-wide refuge taking campaign to make Buddhism an exclusive religion and separate the orthodox Buddhists from incorrect ones that jumbled Buddhism with Taoism and Chinese religious practices. He was fundamentally redefining the basis of what it meant to be a Buddhist in the Malaysian context. According to Tan Lee Ooi's study of Buddhism in contemporary Malaysia, due to the success of the refuge taking movement in the 1970s, the refuge taking

ceremony has now become a common practice encouraged by Buddhist organizations in the country.[81]

In sum, Chuk Mor sought to invent a national Buddhist identity as one that: puts faith into one's daily life; does not mix Buddhism with other religious beliefs and engage in unorthodox forms of religious practices; and has taken refuge in the Triple Gems. A closer look at Chuk Mor's Human-life Buddhism reveals that the monk's idea of "being Buddhist" was actually based on a certain vision of doctrinal orthodoxy and the desire to return to the Buddhist canon, or Tripiṭaka, from which Buddhists had strayed. In other words, the modernist monk's vision of Malaysian Buddhism was based on canonical fundamentalism; he sought to create an exclusive religious identity that distinguishes Buddhists from followers of Chinese customs and religious practices. Chuk Mor considered education as an essential platform to spread Human-life Buddhism and to train a troop of Sangha and lay teachers to promote his version of orthodox Buddhist faith in Malaysia.

Teaching Dharma, Building Spaces

Chuk Mor's early experience and monastic training played a pivotal role in shaping his vision of Buddhist education and religious reform. As a student of Taixu and a graduate of Minnan Buddhist Institute, it came no surprise that he regarded education as an essential platform for inculcating the correct knowledge and teachings

[81] Tan, "The Making of Modern Buddhism," 97-98.

of Buddhism. In an early essay in 1937, Chuk Mor highlighted the ignorance of the Buddhist masses and criticized the Sangha for not putting sufficient effort in promoting Buddhist education and teaching the Dharma:

> In China, the number of people that believe in Buddhism, [I] cannot say that it is not a lot. It is said that two-third of the Chinese people believe in Buddhism. The numbers of people that believe in other religions do not even reach one-third of the figure. Therefore, Buddhism in China should have achieved astonishing growth [and] prosperity; however, this is far from reality. The future of Buddhism in China continues to be dark and gloomy, and [Buddhism] receives criticism and ridicule from the average person in the society! From this, we know that the common society with general superficial faith is not at all concerned with the immediate practical problems of Buddhism. In terms of religious belief, they remain unclear of the real meanings of Buddhism.
>
> […]
>
> The kind of people with blind faith [in Buddhism] are way too many, but we cannot blame these blind faith followers for their mistakes. We can only blame ourselves for not doing a good job in promoting Buddhist education and in spreading [the Dharma] to the masses, which

> [doing so] would enable the common people to obtain a right understanding of Buddhism.[82]

If Chuk Mor felt this sort of disappointment in 1937, one can only imagine what he felt two decades later after he came to Malaysia. In a later essay, titled "The Shape of 'Human-life' Buddhism: A Preface to the True Meaning of Human-Life Buddhism" (*'Rensheng fojiao' moxiang xu rensheng fojiao zhenyi* 「人生佛教」摸象序人生佛教真義), he explained how education was important and relevant to the promotion of Human-life Buddhism. Chuk Mor regarded education as a solution to eradicate mythified superstitions (*shenhua mixin* 神化迷信) from orthodox Buddhism. More importantly, he deemed Human-life Buddhism as relevant and compatible to modern education (*xiandai jiaoyu* 現代教育), which according to him, was based on the principles of pragmaticization of Human-life (*xianshi shenghuo hua* 現實生活化), massization (*qunzhong hua* 群眾化), and scientization (*kexue hua* 科學化):

> Originally, Human-life Buddhism has already focused on the argument of this form of modern education. In the past, Master [Taixu] had specially promoted [modern education] with the hope that humankind would rely on this and proceed towards the pragmaticization of human-life, massization, and scientization in order to take a step forward closer to completing the noble culture of the Buddha. This will make the

[82] Chuk Mor, "You mangcong de xinyang shuodao huoluan fojiao de jiguan 由盲從的信仰說到惑亂佛教的機關," in *Fojiao shishi ganyan*, 23.

> Buddha-dharma [relevant] to the needs of the human-life of the times and be able to survive in the modern culture, and exercise flexible great capacity and great functioning (*daji dayong* 大機大用).[83]

In 1954, Chuk Mor came to Malaya to become the advisor and resident monastic teacher of the Phor Tay School in Penang. As a firm believer in the importance of education, Chuk Mor considered himself a good fit for the job. He was given the immediate task of teaching Buddhist studies classes (*foxue ban* 佛學班) and developing a syllabus for secondary school level students aged between 13 and 16. Chuk Mor thought that it was an excellent opportunity to promote his brand of Buddhist modernism to students at a young age and took his job seriously. Subsequently, he wrote a three-volume textbook for secondary school level Buddhist studies at Phor Tay School.[84] For the first time, a Chinese-language Buddhist studies curriculum and textbook was developed specially for teenagers in Southeast Asia.[85]

Chuk Mor was personally invested in the development of Phor Tay School. Shortly after his arrival in Malaya in September 1954, he organized a three-day art exhibition to fundraise for the expansion of Phor Tay School with the support of the school management board. With the assistance of Guan Zhenmin, Luo Qingquan and

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[83] Chuk Mor, "'Rensheng fojiao' moxiang xu rensheng fojiao zhenyi 「人生佛教」摸象 序人生佛教真義," in *Fojiao yu rensheng*, 98-99.
[84] Chuk Mor used the penname of Huisen 慧森 for the textbooks. See Huisen, *Chuzhong foxue keben* 初中佛學課本, 3 vols. (Penang: Phor Tay School, 1958).
[85] Shi Weiwu, interview by author, Penang, September 24, 2014.

Wang Nongshu, Chuk Mor published the first volume of his calligraphy and painting collection (*Zhumo fashi shuhua ji* 竺摩法師書畫集) and reprinted his *Lectures on the Diamond Sūtra* to raise donation at the event. In the end, Chuk Mor raised close to ten thousand dollars from the exhibition. He donated five thousand dollars to Phor Tay School to support the construction of a new science laboratory. The remaining proceeds went to fund the publication of the *Inexhaustible Lamp* magazine that Chuk Mor had founded a few years earlier in Macau. Following the fundraising campaign, he was appointed executive director of Phor Tay School.[86]

A year later, Chuk Mor and the Phor Tay School principal, Wang Nongshu, decided to set up a Buddhist Higher Education Scholarship (*Fojiao gaodeng jiaoyu jiangxuejin* 佛教高等教育獎學金) to provide financial assistance to needy and talented students wanting to further their studies after graduation. Together, they went to Singapore to hold an art exhibition to raise funds for the scholarship. A second volume of Chuk Mor's calligraphy and painting collection (*Zhumo fashi shuhua ji dier ce* 竺摩法師書畫集第二冊) was published for the exhibition. The event was a success and they raised some thirteen thousand dollars. After paying for the expenses of the painting frames, half of the donations was used to set up the scholarship fund, while the other half was used to publish books of the "[Inexhaustible] Lamp Publishing Book Series" (*Dengshe congshu* 燈社叢書). Following the successful fundraising campaign, a scholarship committee was established in Penang, with Chuk

[86] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 15.

Mor as the director, Xie Liantang 謝蓮塘 as deputy director, and Venerable Zhenguo 真果 and Wang Nongshu as committee members.[87] When Wang Nongshu passed away in 1964, Chuk Mor, together with members of the Phor Tay School, raised another $8,000 to establish the Wang Nongshu Scholarship (*Wang Nongshu jiangxuejin* 王弄書獎學金) to support primary and secondary students from the Phor Tay School.[88]

Besides teaching Dharma classes and supporting education at a Buddhist missionary school, Chuk Mor set up a new Buddhist organization to disseminate ideas of Human-life Buddhism in Malaya. He founded the Chuk Yuen Vihāra (*Zhuyuan jingshe* 竺園精舍), with the support of several lay supporters, to give Dharma lectures and recruit followers. As told to the author in interviews conducted in 2014, Chuk Mor was an eloquent and popular preacher. Although the monk spoke in a strong Zhejiang accent that a majority of the Chinese in Malaysia could barely understand, his disciples were always present to translate his sermon into Hokkien for the southern dialect-speaking audiences. Most of his lay disciples were from the Hokkien-speaking Chinese middle class.[89] As the number of his disciples grew, the vihāra could no longer accommodate the fast growing congregation. In July 1962, at the request of his followers Chuk Mor decided to raise funds for the expansion of his organization. He explained the reason behind the urgent need to secure a bigger venue for the

[87] Ibid., 15.
[88] Ibid., 25.
[89] Koh Tsu Koon, interview by author, Penang, September 13, 2014; Shi Chi Chuan, interview by author, Penang, September 9, 2014.

propagation of Buddhism: "The truth is not flourishing, the disorder of the world is becoming more urgent by the day; [with] the calling of wrong livelihood, disasters are frequent. The wish for the purification of human-life requires the promotion of the Buddha-dharma" (*Zhenli buchang, shiluan riji, wangye ganzhao, zaihuo pinreng, yu rensheng zhi jinghua, xu fofa zhi tichang* 真理不昌，世亂日亟，妄業感召，災禍頻仍，欲人生之淨化，需佛法之提倡). Accordingly, the monk founded a "construction fundraising committee" (*choujian weiyuan hui* 籌建委員會) headed by chairman Huang Xinguan 黃心觀, Liang Xintang 梁心堂, Lu Xinrong 陸心融, and others. The committee spent the next two to three years raising funds for a new temple.[90]

Instead of building a traditional styled Buddhist temple as a place for ritual and worship, as was already prevalent in Malaysia, Chuk Mor came up with the idea of starting a modern-style "lecture hall" (*jiangtang* 講堂) as his new religious space to promote Buddhist education. For this reason, the monk acquired the building of a former American consul office on 5 Jalan Pangkor and converted it into a new Buddhist site.[91] The innovative architectural style of his lecture hall reflects the ideas of Human-life Buddhist, which focus on the use of devotional space for education rather than ritual. His disciple recalled that it was unique for a Buddhist organization at that time to be located in "a western looking building without the usual Chinese

[90] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 24.
[91] Chen Qiuping 陳秋平, "Zhumo fashi yu sanhui jiangtang 竺摩法師與三慧講堂," in *Huihai mingdeng*, 109.

dragons and phoenixes on the roof" (see Figure 3).[92] The revolutionary architectural style of Chuk Mor's "lecture hall" reflects his intention to make Buddhism more distant from the image and practices of Chinese religions. The monk was more interested to use the space as a lecture hall for the pragmatic function of preaching to a larger audience.

Figure 2.3: Triple Wisdom Hall in 1966.

Photo courtesy of Triple Wisdom Hall.

When the new location was ready in March 1965, Chuk Mor closed down Chuk Yuen Vihāra to become the abbot of Triple Wisdom Hall. He renamed the organization Triple Wisdom Hall with the hope that Buddhists in Malaysia would be

[92] Shi Chi Chuan, interview by author, Penang, September 9, 2014.

able to obtain the "Triple Wisdom" (*sanhui* 三慧)—listening (*wen* 聞), contemplation (*si* 思), and cultivation (*xiu* 修)—from the Buddha's teachings.[93] Two months later, Triple Wisdom Hall organized its first Vesak Day celebrations.[94] Chuk Mor gave a lecture titled "The Maxim that all Sentient Beings can attain Buddhahood" (*Zhongsheng jieke chengfo zhi liqu* 眾生皆可成佛之理趣) at the celebratory event.[95] A year later on April 8, 1966, Chuk Mor invited senior monastic leaders from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia to attend the opening ceremony of his new lecture hall. In his speech at the opening ceremony, the abbot explained four reasons behind the founding of Triple Wisdom Hall:

> First, although there are many monasteries and temples in Malaysia and Singapore, there is no lecture hall, so [I] decided to attempt to establish one; second, with the increasing size of the congregation, there is a need for a bigger venue to accommodate them; third, while there are many [Buddhists] devotees and followers, there are few that understand [the Dharma], and thus, the teaching of the Buddha-dharma is extremely crucial in the present-day; fourth, the lecture hall plans to offer [a variety of programs such as] research, talks, educational,

[93] See footnote 3 for a definition of the Buddhist concept "Triple Wisdom."
[94] Vesak Day or Vesākha is the day that commemorates the birth (*jāti*), enlightenment (*nirvāna*), and death (*parinirvāṇa*) of the Gautama Buddha.
[95] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 26.

> cultural, charity, meditation, chanting, singing, and scholarship, and will do so gradually according to conditions.[96]

At the beginning, Triple Wisdom Hall served as a lecture space for Chuk Mor to deliver his sermons, as well as to conduct chanting services and meditation retreats. Overtime the organization gradually expanded and to meet the increasingly diverse needs of its congregation created five subgroups, namely, Buddha-dharma Research and Cultivation Society (*Fofa yanxiu hui* 佛法研修會), Triple Wisdom Hall Sūtra Publication Society (*Huitang yinjing hui* 慧堂印經會), Sunday Free School (*Zhourri yixiao* 週日義校), Human-life Buddhist Studies Center (*Rensheng foxue zhongxin* 人生佛學中心), and the Venerable Chuk Mor Foundation (*Zhumo fashi jijin hui* 竺摩法師基金會).[97]

The Buddha-dharma Research and Cultivation Society of the Triple Wisdom Hall was established in 1968 to encourage research on Buddhist scriptures and to spread the religion to a younger generation of Malaysia born Chinese. Chuk Mor believed that it was important to educate the young Malaysian Chinese students to be future advocates of Human-life Buddhism. Therefore, the Research Society sought to attract the educated younger generation by using research to present Buddhism in a rational light and separate the religion from "inappropriate practices" (*budang fengqi*

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[96] Ibid., 28-29.
[97] Chen, "Zhumo fashi," 110-112.

不當風氣).[98] Subsequently, the Triple Wisdom Hall Sūtra Publication Society was founded in 1970 to circulate Buddhist texts for free distribution (*mianfe zengyue* 免費贈閱). With the growth of literacy in Malaysia, there was a demand for Buddhist publications. Prior to that, it was difficult for Buddhists to acquire and read Buddhist books and scriptures in Malaysia. The Publication Society, on the one hand, purchased books from Buddhist publishing houses and distributed them for free to the congregation. On the other hand, it worked with publishing companies to reprint Buddhist texts with no copyright restrictions. The Publication Society printed a number of complimentary Buddhist books (*jieyuan foshu* 結緣佛書), such as *Lectures on the Chapter of the Universal Gate* (*Pumen pin jianghua* 普門品講話), two volumes of *Questions and Answers on Buddhist Studies* (*Foxue wenda diyiji* 佛學問答), *Lectures on the Kṣitigarbha Sūtra*, *Discussions on Issues Concerning Buddhism* (*Fojiao wenti zuotan* 佛教問題座談), and *Lectures on the Heart Sūtra* (*Xinjing jianghua* 心經講話). Later on, it published the *Complete Works of Elder Monk Chuk Mor's Buddhist Teachings* (*Zhumo zhanglao foxue quanshu* 竺摩長老佛學全書) and produced a CD-ROM of the monk's 26-volume *Complete Works from the Fragrance Incense Studio* (*Zhuanxiang huashi wenji* 篆香畫室文集).[99]

Later, in 1975, the organization set up two more subgroups. In January 1975, it launched Sunday Free School with the assistance of youth leaders from the Buddha-

[98] Ibid., 111.
[99] Ibid., 110-111.

dharma Research and Cultivation Society to run weekly Dharma classes for Buddhist children and youths. The Sunday school aimed to plant the "seeds of Bodhi" (*puti zhongzi* 菩提種子) into the youths by imparting Buddhist knowledge and moral values to them.[100] In addition to offering religious courses, the Sunday school also provided free supplementary secular subject classes on Chinese-language, Malay-language, English-language, and mathematics; free transport to and from the Triple Wisdom Hall, free snacks, as well as annual study awards and incentives.[101] Two months later on March 17, 1975, the Human-life Buddhist Studies Center was declared open to commemorate the death anniversary of Taixu and to celebrate his ideas of Human-life Buddhism. The purpose of the Center was to:

> Teach the unsurpassed Dharma expounded by the Buddha, promote the original principles of Human-life Buddhism advocated by Master Taixu, and research how to practice [the Dharma] in order to improve human-life; concomitantly, to make Buddhism organized (*zuzhi hua* 組織化), popular (*dazhong hua* 大眾化), and scientific (*kexue hua* 科學化); and to arouse the mind of people who are studying the Buddha-dharma with the intention to achieve enlightenment (*fa puti xin* 發菩提心) and walk the bodhisattva path (*pusa dao* 菩薩道) with the ultimate goal of attaining Buddhahood (*fodao* 佛道); without having the need to

[100] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 40.
[101] Chen, "Zhumo fashi," 112.

> tread the in-between winding paths of deva vehicle (*tiancheng* 天乘) and two vehicles[102] (*ercheng* 二乘).[103]

Chuk Mor became the founding advisor of the Human-life Center, and his lay disciples, Huang Xinguan, Chen Shaoying 陳少英, and Chen Yanjin 陳延進, were appointed as chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary, respectively. At the opening of the Center, the monk accentuated the importance of propagating the doctrines of Human-life Buddhism. He also memorialized Taixu's contributions to the reform of Chinese Buddhism and spoke about the completion of Taixu's relic stupa (*sheli ta* 舍利塔) in Triple Wisdom Hall and its upcoming consecration ceremony.[104] All in all, the diverse activities of the Triple Wisdom Hall reveal that the organization was vastly different from the majority of Buddhist temples in postcolonial Malaysia. Chuk Mor did not want to establish a new organization to function as a place of ritual and worship. Instead, he wanted to pioneer a modern space that offered programs that embodied his principles of Buddhist modernism.

Chuk Mor was responsible for the setting up of Malaysian Buddhist Institute, the first Buddhist seminary in postcolonial Malaysia. A graduate of Minnan Buddhist Institute, he recognized the importance of starting a seminary to "encourage Buddhist

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[102] These two vehicles are the śrāvakas vehicle (*shengwen cheng* 聲聞乘) of the hearers and direct disciples, and the pratyekabuddhas vehicle (*pizhifo cheng* 辟支佛乘) of self-realizers.
[103] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 41.
[104] Ibid.

education and nurture talents for Dharma propagation" (*tichang fojiao jiaoyu, peiyu hongfa rencai* 提倡佛教教育, 培育弘法人才).[105] As early as at the founding of the Malaysian Buddhist Federation in 1959, Chuk Mor, together with Buddhist leaders, had agreed on the plan to set up a Buddhist seminary in Malaya.[106] With the independence of Malaya, Chuk Mor saw the need to "localize" (*bentu hua* 本土化) Buddhism by recruiting and training local-born monastics and reduce the reliance on foreign visiting monks.[107] However, this plan was not materialized until a decade later in 1969.

In May 1969, Buddhist leaders in Malaysia gathered at the Kek Lok Si to witness the consecration ceremony of the renovated main hall. After the event, the Malaysian Buddhist Association held an Executive Board meeting under the leadership of Chuk Mor to discuss the establishment of the Malaysian Buddhist Institute. At the meeting, the Executive Board agreed on four issues regarding the seminary: first, the draft operational guidelines of the Malaysian Buddhist Institute; second, the appointment of a twelve-man preparatory committee consisting of Chuk Mor, Venerable Baisheng 白聖 from Taiwan, Venerable Zhenguo, Venerable Xiangkong 祥空, Huang Xinguan, and Wu Renjun 吳人俊 from Penang, Venerable Bendao 本道 and Venerable Jing'an 鏡安 from Selangor, Venerable Jinxing and Venerable Jinming from Malacca, as well as Venerable Shengjin and Venerable

[105] Lu Youzhong 盧友中, *Yandang shanseng: Zhumo fashi zhuan* 雁蕩山僧: 竺摩法師傳 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2010), 157.
[106] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 18.
[107] Lu, *Yandang shanseng*, 157.

Zongjian 宗鑑 from Perak;[108] third, the appointment of Chuk Mor as the principal and Venerable Baisheng as the vice-principal, granting them autonomous administrative authority of the seminary; and fourth, the preparatory committee would be dissolved once the Board of Directors were formed.[109]

The Malaysian Buddhist Institute started its operations on March 3, 1970. The school held an opening ceremony two weeks later on March 22 to welcome its first cohort of students. Chuk Mor thus became the founding principal of the seminary and remained in that position until his death in 2002. State Executive councilor of Penang, Khoo Kay Por (Qiu Jipu 邱繼圃), graced the occasion on behalf of Penang Chief Minister Lim Chong Eu (Lin Cangyou 林蒼祐), as the guest of honor of the opening ceremony. At the observance, the Guest of Honor Khoo Kay Por, representative of the Board of Directors Koh Peng Teng (Xu Pingdeng 許平等), and principal Chuk Mor delivered their speeches to the audience consisting of monastic leaders in Malaysia as well as the Institute's freshmen.[110] Their speeches underlined the importance of cultivating Sangha talents to propagate the Dharma for the future of Buddhism.[111]

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[108] The document mentioned an "eleven-man preparatory committee" (*chouwei shiyi ren* 籌委十一人) but listed twelve names. See "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 34.
[109] Ibid. 33-34.
[110] Dato Koh Peng Teng was the late father of my respondent Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon. He was one of the earliest lay disciples of Chuk Mor.
[111] "Zhumo fashi jianpu chugao," 35.

Figure 2.4: Board Members, Faculty, and Students of the Malaysian Buddhist Institute, circa 1970s. Photo courtesy of Triple Wisdom Hall.

As the inaugural principal of the seminary, Chuk Mor had to start everything from scratch. The monk, with the help of colleagues, created the institute's motto, designed the logo, and drew up the regulations. He then recruited four or five instructors to teach specialized courses and six or seven instructors to teach secular subjects.[112] Although Chuk Mor was busy as the principal of the seminary, he personally taught some of the *sūtra* (*jing* 經) and *śāstra* (*lun* 論) courses. He lectured the sūtra courses *on Three Sūtras of Bequeathed Teachings* (*yijiao sanjing* 遺教三經), *Amitâbha Sūtra* (*Amituo jing* 阿彌陀經), *Chapter of the Universal Gate* (*Pumen pin* 普門品), *Chapter on the Vows of Samantabhadra* (*Puxian xingyuan pin* 普賢行願品),

[112] Chuk Mor, *Xingjiao guo qianqiu*, 29.

and the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing* 金剛經), as well as *śāstra* classes on *One Hundred Dharmas Treatise* (*Baifa mingmen lun* 百法明門論), *Verses on the Structure of the Eight Consciousnesses* (*Bashi guiju song* 八識規矩頌), *Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only* (*Weishi sanshi song* 唯識三十頌), *Twenty Verses on Consciousness Only* (*Weishi ershi song* 唯識二十頌), and *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Dacheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論).[113]

The Malaysian Buddhist Institute operated on a ten-year curriculum, consisting of a year of preparatory school (*yubei ban* 預備班), three years of middle school (*chuzhong ban* 初中班), three years of high school (*gaozhong ban* 高中班), and three years of further education school (*shenzao ban* 深造班).[114] In the first few years of its opening, the seminary enrolled approximately fifty to sixty students annually. Subsequent years saw a dip in enrollment with approximately forty to fifty students each year. The student population consisted of ethnic Chinese, with Sangha from monasteries and nunneries in the various states of Malaysia, as well as lay Buddhists from ordinary households and secular educational background.[115] From my interview with the current principal, Chi Chern, I gathered that Chuk Mor was very serious in training young monastics and made an effort to send his ordained disciples to receive their Buddhist Studies education at the Malaysian Buddhist Institute. He also encouraged his disciples who graduated from the seminary to pursue higher education

[113] Lu, *Yandang shanseng*, 158.
[114] Chuk Mor, *Xingjiao guo qianqiu*, 29.
[115] Ibid., 29.

overseas, and to return after their graduation to teach at the seminary.[116] The Malaysian Buddhist Institute demonstrates Chuk Mor's attempt to draw on modernist ideas and transnational networks to create a national Sangha in Malaysia.

According to Jiang Lianzhao's 姜联招 study on the Malaysian Buddhist Institute, the seminary has offered more than 100 courses between its founding in 1970 and the graduating class of 2006.[117] These courses include twenty-eight courses on the *sūtra*, twenty-two on the *śāstra*, four on the *vinaya* (*lü* 律), fourteen on essence of the Dharma (*fayao* 法要), three on Chan studies (*chanxue* 禪學), nine on historical studies (*shixue* 史學), nine foundational courses on Buddhist Studies (*jichu foxue* 基礎佛學), and thirteenth on secular subjects (*shixue* 世學). In addition, the seminary offered compulsory courses on meditation (*chanxiu* 禪修) and Chinese monastic chants (*fanbai* 梵唄) as well as supplementary courses on evangelism methods (*bujiao fa* 布教法) and Buddhist music.[118] The comprehensive Buddhist studies program of the Malaysian Buddhist Institute provided graduates with strong knowledge of Buddhism and equipped them with the necessary skills to disseminate the Dharma in Malaysia. As of 2006, 577 students had graduated from the seminary.[119] After completing their studies, some graduates furthered their education overseas, such as in

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[116] Shi Chi Chern, interview by author, Penang, September 29, 2014.
[117] Jiang Lianzhao 姜聯招, "Dama hanchuan fojiao jiaoyu fazhan chutan—yi Malaixiya foxue yuan weizhu de tansuo 大馬漢傳佛教教育發展初探—以馬來西亞佛學院為主的探索," in *Malaixiya fojiao qingnian zonghui 40 zhounian jinian tekan* (Selangor: Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia, 2010), 95.
[118] Ibid., 95, 103-106.
[119] Ibid., 101.

Hong Kong or Taiwan; others returned to serve in temples where they came from or took up teaching positions at a different Buddhist organization.[120]

By and large, education is the common thread that runs through Chuk Mor's religious career in postcolonial Malaysia. He was a supporter of both religious and secular education. In terms of religious education, Chuk Mor was concerned with spreading the principles of Human-life Buddhism to the Buddhist community in Malaysia. He began his career teaching at a Buddhist missionary school and writing a new three-volume Buddhist Studies textbook and curriculum for the students. Thereafter, the monk founded the Triple Wisdom Hall to propagate the teaching of Human-life Buddhism at a larger scale and recruited many monastic and lay followers. The organization's innovative architectural style and pioneering research and publication programs demonstrate Chuk Mor's ambition to redefine the meaning of "being Buddhist" in Malaysia. Chuk Mor took a step further and established the Malaysian Buddhist Institute with the goal of training monastic and lay teachers, molding them according to his views of Human-life Buddhism. The seminary equipped students with the necessary knowledge and skills to spread Buddhism and disseminate Chuk Mor's ideas more extensively in Malaysia. Chuk Mor was not only interested in promoting Buddhist education, but also recognized the importance of secular education. After all, he believed that Human-life Buddhism was compatible with science and modern education. For this reason, it was hardly surprising that Chuk Mor raised money for the construction of a science laboratory and supported the

[120] Chuk Mor, *Xingjiao guo qianqiu*, 29.

setting up of scholarship funds at the Phor Tay School. He also encouraged the teaching of secular subjects such as languages and mathematics at the Triple Wisdom Hall's Sunday Free School, as well as secular courses such as sociology, communications, and counseling at the Malaysian Buddhist Institute. Chuk Mor's emphasis on education and his pioneering endeavors had played a significant role in transforming the Buddhist religious landscape in Malaysia.

Conclusion

On February 4, 2002, Chuk Mor passed away, leaving behind 127 monastic disciples and more than 50,000 lay followers.[121] Approximately five thousand people attended his funeral, including Malaysian politicians, renowned Buddhist leaders, and prominent members from the arts and literary community. After his death, his legacy as the "Father of Malaysian Chinese Buddhism" lives on. Chuk Mor's *Complete Works* have been made into a CD-ROM and is now made available online.[122] Triple Wisdom Hall produced a song and made a music video to celebrate his life.[123] The organization also constructed a new building and named it Venerable Chuk Mor Education Center (*Zhumo zhanglao jiaoyu zhongxin* 竺摩長老教育中心) in honor of

[121] *Zhugong jianpu* 竺公簡譜, unpublished manuscript, Triple Wisdom Hall, Penang, undated.
[122] *Zhuanxiang huashi wenji* 篆香畫室文集, 2017, http://triplewisdompenang.org/篆香室文集/ (accessed April 10, 2017).
[123] "Yandangshan seng Zhumo fashi 雁蕩山僧 竺摩法師," December 11, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOT-DhZnCog (accessed April 10, 2017). Chi Chern wrote the lyrics and renowned Malaysian Buddhist songwriter, Seng Tak Pin (Cheng Zuobin 程作彬), wrote the music.

the late founder.[124] The Chinese arts and literary community organized a calligraphy exhibition in 2012 to commemorate the ten-year anniversary of his death.[125] A concert was held to pay tribute to him in 2014.[126] More than a decade after his passing, Chuk Mor is still remembered by his disciples and the Malaysian Chinese community in general.

Previous scholarly writing on Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia has suggested that "revival," "revivalism," and "revitalization" of the religion occurred in the postcolonial period. While Trevor Ling contends that Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia experienced a "revival without revivalism," and suggests that the development of Buddhism was "quiet" instead of the "noisy" kind of revival,[127] Chee-Beng Tan prefers the term "revitalization" to "revivalism" because he considers "revivalism" as a term that is associated with "Islamic revivalism" caused by the long-term conflict between the Muslim world and the West.[128] A recent dissertation by Lee Ooi Tan argues that Buddhist revitalization in Malaysia can be defined as the strengthening of

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[124] The opening ceremony of the Venerable Chuk Mor Education Center was held in 2013 to celebrate the 100-year birth anniversary of the late Chuk Mor. See *Zhumo zhanglao jiaoyu zhongxin luocheng dianli, wenwu guan jiemu li, bainian mingdan zansong zhuisi hui jinian tekan* 竺摩長老教育中心落成典禮，文物館揭幕禮，百年冥誕讚頌追思會紀念特刊 (Penang: The Buddhist Triple Wisdom Hall, 2013).
[125] *Bugua xintou: Zhumo shangren shufa ji* 不掛心頭: 竺摩上人書法集 (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Perhimpunan China Kuala Lumpur Dan Selangor, 2012).
[126] *2014 nian yibao haichao hui*.
[127] Trevor Ling, "Revival Without Revivalism: The Case of the Buddhists of Malaysia," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 7, 2 (August 1992): 326.
[128] Chee-Beng Tan, "The Study of Chinese Religions in Southeast Asia: Some Views," in *The Chinese Overseas: Routledge Library of Modern China*, Vol. II: Culture, Institution and Networks, ed. Hong Liu (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 303.

Buddhism into a more "organized religion" due to the arrival of new ideas via historical and contemporary translocal networks and influence from the broader social and political transformations "to transform Buddhism to fit the modern category of 'religion' as defined by the dominant discourse of modernity."[129] However, I propose that neither "revivalism" nor "revitalization" aptly describes Chuk Mor's reforms in Malaysia. This was because Buddhism did not experience a state of "decline" prior to his arrival to necessitate a "revival" or "revitalization." On the contrary, what Chuk Mor did was to displace the existing forms of Buddhism in Malaysia with his version of Human-life Buddhism.

This chapter has argued that Chuk Mor redefined the concept of "being Buddhist" in Malaysia and created a Malaysian Chinese Buddhist identity based on the ideas of Human-life Buddhism. When he first arrived in Penang, majority of Malaysian Chinese Buddhists knew little about Buddhist doctrines and mixed Buddhism with Taoism and Chinese religious customs. Furthermore, Buddhism was commonly associated with funerary rites and the dead. Chuk Mor sought to create a national Buddhist identity based on the principles of Human-life Buddhism: incorporate Buddhism into one's life; practice of orthodox, right faith Buddhism; and refuge in the Triple Gems. In other words, he wanted to produce a new definition of "being Buddhist" for the Malaysian Buddhist community. He saw the promotion of Buddhism education as a means to achieve his goal. For this reason, Chuk Mor contributed to the expansion of the Phor Tay School, founded the Malaysian Buddhist

[129] Tan, "The Making of Modern Buddhism," 3.

Association, established the Triple Wisdom Hall, and started the Malaysian Buddhist Institute. These Buddhist spaces were crucial in disseminating doctrinal knowledge, and more importantly, facilitating intra-religious conversion among the Buddhist community in Malaysia.

In Chuk Mor's interpretation of Buddhist modernism, we find a conjunction of self-proclaimed orthodoxy, historical claims, and institution building. These were articulated in the context of postcolonial Malaysia to win Buddhist converts and to present Buddhism as a modern and rational religion in a Muslim-majority nation. In his attempt to create a national form of Chinese Buddhism for the modern Malaysian nation, Chuk Mor wrote and preached about orthodox Buddhism and the importance of refuge taking in relation to Buddhist scriptures, and more broadly, Buddhist pasts. He sought to promote his visions of Buddhist modernism through education. The ambition and intention of Chuk Mor's endeavors become clearer as we watch him establish a nationwide Buddhist association, a lecture hall, and a seminary to create a national Sangha and lay community.

CHAPTER 3

Bringing Dharma Across the Seas: Yen Pei's Humanistic Buddhism

March 16, 1986 marked the grand opening ceremony of the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services (*Xinjiapo fojiao fuli xiehui* 新加坡佛教福利協會, hereafter SBWS). The opening ceremony was graced by Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Ong Teng Cheong (Wang Dingchang 王鼎昌, 1936-2002), as well as Buddhist leaders from Singapore and overseas. In his speech, Ong Teng Cheong commended Yen Pei (Yanpei 演培, 1917-1996), founder of the SBWS, for "the practical manner in which he has translated the high ideals of Buddhism to meet the felt needs of the people." He also lauded "the dedication, ability and concerted effort of the management committee, members, volunteers, followers, and supporters" of the SBWS for "contributing to the well-being of [Singapore] society."[1] Subsequently, the Singapore government conferred on Yen Pei the Public Service Medal and the Public Service Star award in 1986 and 1992, respectively, in recognition of his contributions to social welfare.[2]

Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng's seminal study on Buddhism in Singapore, which draws on fieldwork and research conducted in the 1980s and 90s, examines the

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[1] Ong Teng Cheong, "Speech by Mr Ong Teng Cheong, Second Deputy Prime Minister," Grand Opening Ceremony of the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Service, Singapore, March 16, 1986.

[2] See *Xinlu* 心路 [A journey within] (Singapore: Buddhist Cultural Center, 1997), 82-83.

process of "Buddhicization" of Chinese religious syncretism and a movement towards Reformist Buddhism within the Chinese community. She suggests that 65% of the Buddhists in Singapore regard themselves as "Reformist Buddhists." Kuah-Pearce argues that the agents responsible for transforming the religious landscape of the Chinese were the Singapore state, the Buddhist Sangha and the Reformist Buddhist. She also considers Christian fundamentalists as a catalyst that hastened the process of religious modernization within the Singaporean Chinese community.[3] According to her study, the activities of Reformist Buddhists span both the religious and secular domains. In the former, there are six types of activities, namely, disseminating Buddhist scriptural knowledge, fostering broad participation, educating committed Buddhist followers, engaging in missionary and proselytizing work, putting faith into actual practice and action, and legitimizing Vesak Day as a public holiday. Within the secular domain, Reformist Buddhists organize and promote socio-cultural and welfare activities.[4] These activities include contributions to charity and welfare work as well as participating in non-governmental organizations. Kuah-Pearce regards Yen Pei as "one of the main scholar monks in Buddhism in the Singapore society" and a representative figure in the reformist Buddhist movement.[5]

Yen Pei, with his contemporaries, Venerables Hong Choon (Hongchuan 宏船, 1907-1990), Kong Hiap (Guangqia 廣洽, 1900-1994), and Siong Khye (Changkai 常

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[3] Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng, *State, Society and Religious Engineering: Towards a Reformist Buddhism in Singapore* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003), 1.
[4] Ibid., 233.
[5] Ibid., 125-127.

凱, 1916-1990), were regarded by Singaporean Buddhists as the four great monks in the history of Singapore. These monks, all borned and received their religious education in China, immigrated to Singapore and played a pivotal role in the development of Chinese Buddhism in the postcolonial period.[6] Yen Pei was best remembered in Singapore as a "scholar, social worker, monk."[7] He was responsible for bringing the ideas of "Humanistic Buddhism" (*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教, also known as "Human-Realm Buddhism") to Southeast Asia and promoting them in his lectures and writings. Most of his writings were published in a 34-volume collection entitled *Collected Works of Mindful Observation* (*Diguan quanji* 諦觀全集), and a subsequent 12-volume sequel titled, *A Sequel to the [Collected Works of] Mindful Observation* (*Diguan xuji* 諦觀續集) making him the most prolific Buddhist writer of the period in maritime Southeast Asia.[8] In the second phase of his religious career in Singapore, Yen Pei attempted to put his knowledge of Humanistic Buddhism into practice. He established the SBWS and became a social activist. Yen Pei drew on

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[6] Seck Kwang Phing, interview by author, Singapore, July 6, 2014. The four monks were given the nickname "Fortune, blessing, longevity, and happiness" (*fulushouxi* 福祿壽喜). For brief biographies of Hong Choon, Kong Hiap, and Siong Khye, see Xu Yuantai 許源泰, *Yan'ge yu moshi: Xinjiapo daojiao he fojiao chuanbo yanjiu* 沿革與模式: 新加坡道教和佛教傳播研究 (Singapore: National University of Singapore Department of Chinese Studies and Global Publishing, 2013), 135-145.

[7] *The Straits Times*, June 16, 1991.

[8] For a study of Yen Pei's *Collected Works of Mindful Observation*, see Mei-lan Liao 廖美蘭, "Yanpei fashi de zhuzuo nianpu jiqi shicheng beijing zhi yanjiu 演培法師(1917-1996)的著作年譜及其師承背景之研究" (MA thesis, Huafan University, 2010). Yen Pei's autobiography*, Confessions of an Ordinary and Foolish Monk* (*Yige fanyu seng de zibai* 一個凡愚僧的自白), is a very useful primary source that gives insight into Yen Pei's life and times. For a biography of Yen Pei, see Yang Shuya 楊淑雅, *Renjian fojiao: Yanpei fashi zai xinjiapo de hongfa shiji* 人間佛教: 演培法師在新加坡的弘法事蹟 (Kaohsiung: Cui bolin qiye gufen youxian gongsi, 2006).

Buddhist doctrines to justify the need for Buddhists to engage with secular social issues and promote charity work.

While Kuah-Pearce rightly points out that the local agents—Singapore state, Buddhist Sangha, lay Buddhists, and Christian evangelists—were responsible for the so-called process of "Buddhicization" in postcolonial Singapore, she neglects to consider how transnational networks were just as crucial to explain the introduction of Buddhist modernism into a global city-state. This chapter reconsiders the emergence of Singapore's "reformist Buddhism" by focusing on the transnational biography of Yen Pei. I argue for the need to historicize "reformist Buddhism" in the Singapore context and to consider the South China Sea Buddhist networks linking multiple nodes that circulated people, ideas, and resources between China, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and beyond. I will demonstrate how a study of the transnational biography of Yen Pei is a fine example of how an individual life, examined in grainy detail, can offer insights into Buddhist modernism in Asia. At a broader level, the case of Yen Pei reveals how Singapore's Buddhist history was intertwined with the larger history of South China Sea Buddhism in the twentieth century.

A Humble Beginning

Yen Pei was born into a poor farming family in the Shaobo 邵伯 town of Yangzhou 揚州 city in Jiangsu 江蘇 province, China, in 1917. Yen Pei's given name was Li Baoliang 李寶良, and he was the fifth child in a family of seven with four boys

and three girls. His family depended on subsistence farming on their four *mu* 畝 of farmland as the mainstay of their livelihood.[9] When Yen Pei was seven to eight years old, his parents sent him to a local private school. Before going to class in the morning, he would pick up dog waste to use as fertilizer for his family's farm.[10] At the local school, Yen Pei studied classical Chinese texts, such as the *Hundred Family Surnames* (*Baijia xing* 百家姓), *Thousand Character Classic* (*Qianzi wen* 千字文), *Three Character Classic* (*Sanzi jing* 三字經), and *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學).[11]

Yen Pei's second brother was a Buddhist monk by the Dharma name of Daochan 道禪. When Daochan turned twenty in 1928, Yen Pei accompanied his parents to attend a seven-day ordination ceremony at Liubaotou Guanyin Monastery (*Liubaotou Guanyin si* 劉堡頭觀音寺). The senior monks offered him food and accompanied him around the monastery. The twelve-year-old Yen Pei had an enjoyable time at the monastery and refused to return home with his parents at the end of the seven-day event. Yen Pei's parents did not want another child to become a monk, but Yen Pei was reluctant to go home. Hence, Daochan persuaded their parents to allow Yen Pei to spend Lunar New Year at the monastery and promised to send

[9] *Mu* 畝 is a Chinese unit of area that is roughly equivalent to one-fifteenth of a hectare or one-sixth of an acre.
[10] Ibid., 3.
[11] Ibid., 10-11.

Yen Pei home on his way to Nanjing 南京 to attend a higher ordination ceremony at Mount Baohua (*Baohua shan* 寶華山) in the following year.[12]

After Lunar New Year, Daochan had to leave for Nanjing and return his younger brother back to their parents. However, Yen Pei refused to leave the monastery. Although Daochan's monastery was unwilling to ordain Yen Pei without obtaining his parents' permission, Yen Pei went to the nearby Fanjialun Field of Merit Hermitage (*Fanjialun Futian an* 范家崙福田庵) to seek ordination. In 1929, Yen Pei was ordained as a novice by Venerable Changshan 常善, and was given the Dharma name Yanpei 演培 and the courtesy name Tianhuang 天潢. He taught Yen Pei the morning and evening liturgy and sent him to continue his education at a private school. At the monastery, Yen Pei took charge of the morning and evening prayers and helped with the farming chores. This routine went on for a couple of years.[13]

In 1934, Changshan received a letter from Baoying Prosperity and Longevity Vinaya Monastery (*Baoying Fushou lüyuan* 寶應福壽律院) in the neighboring county, inviting him to serve as a guest prefect (*zhike* 知客) for an upcoming higher ordination ceremony. The letter also invited Changshan to bring along his disciple, Yen Pei, to receive his precepts at the fifty-three day event.[14] During the ordination ceremony, Yen Pei recalled that one of his ordination teachers, who was the academic director of

[12] Ibid., 7-9.
[13] Ibid., 10-11.
[14] Ibid., 14-15.

Jade Mountain Buddhist Institute (*Yushan foxue yuan* 玉山佛學院), encouraged him to further his religious education at a Buddhist seminary. Yen Pei was very interested to do so, but his master Changshan was less keen. After receiving his higher ordination, Yen Pei returned to his ancestral temple (*zuting* 祖庭) to pray respect to his ancestral teachers.[15] Changshan threw a banquet and invited local elites and community leaders to celebrate the higher ordination of his disciple. At the banquet, Changshan announced his plans to retire as the abbot and nominated Yen Pei as his successor.[16] Yen Pei, however, was not interested to become a temple administrator and wanted to "seek the Dharma outside" (*dao waimian qiufa* 到外面求法).[17]

A few days after the banquet, Yen Pei sought permission from his master to take leave of his duties to visit his parents. In reality, it was his excuse to get out of the monastery and further his education.[18] In the lunar fifth month of 1934, Yen Pei, accompanied by a family friend, first traveled to Shanghai 上海 to meet with his brother Daochan who was then residing at the Jade Buddha Monastery (*Yufo si* 玉佛寺).[19] Yen Pei resided briefly at the Jade Buddha Monastery before moving to the Fazang Monastery (*Fazang si* 法藏寺). He continued his sojourn at Fazang Monastery, a sūtra recitation and penitential offering (*jingchan* 經懺) temple. During his stay at Fazang Monastery, Yen Pei made some money conducting Buddhist rites (*foshi* 佛事),

[15] Ibid., 22-23.
[16] Ibid., 24-26.
[17] Ibid., 27.
[18] Ibid., 29-34.
[19] Ibid., 35-39.

while at the same time, searching for a Buddhist seminary to continue his education.[20] Eventually, he decided to pursue his education at Guanzong Monastery (*Guanzong si* 觀宗寺) in Ningbo 寧波 in Zhejiang 浙江 province.[21] His departure from Fazang Monastery marked the beginning of his education career. He would spend the next decade learning and traveling before becoming a scholar-monk in his own right.

A Scholar-Monk in the Making

In the spring of 1935, Yen Pei arrived at Guanzong Monastery, a renowned monastery of Tiantai 天台 Buddhism.[22] He first enrolled in the elementary Buddhist studies course with some sixty young monks aged between fifteen and twenty. Subsequently, he was promoted to study at the monastery's research society (*yanjiu she* 研究社). In the course of his studies at the research society, Yen Pei learned about the *Collected Notes on the Outline of the Four Teachings* (*Sijiaoyi jizhu* 四教儀集註), a foundational text to the doctrinal teachings of Tiantai Buddhism.[23] While Yen Pei was happy to be given the opportunity to further his studies, he felt that the course was too narrowly focused on the Tiantai sect. Furthermore, he thought that the program offered little instruction on essay writing. For these reasons, Yen Pei considered transferring to a different seminary to continue his monastic education.[24]

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[20] Ibid., 39-43.
[21] Ibid., 44.
[22] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Chuk Mor was also studied at this temple.
[23] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 46-47.
[24] Ibid., 47-49.

Several of Yen Pei's classmates told him that Minnan Buddhist Institute (*Minnan foxue yuan* 閩南佛學院) offered more comprehensive training in Buddhist studies and writing. At the same time, Yen Pei became a fan of the *Sound of the Sea Tide* (*Haichao yin* 海潮音) magazine, a periodical founded by Master Taixu 太虛, that published ideas of Buddhist modernism that was considered too radical by many, as discussed earlier in chapter 1. Yen Pei recalled that Guanzong Monastery forbade their student-monks to read *Sound of the Sea Tide*; anyone caught could be expelled from the seminary. Therefore, he and his classmates would secretly read the magazine passed to them from the next door Yanqing Monastery (*Yanqing si* 延慶寺). After careful consideration, Yen Pei made up his mind to leave Guanzong Monastery after two years without finishing his program. He left the monastery quietly without bidding farewell and collecting his ordination certificate (*jiedie* 戒牒).[25]

In the summer of 1936, Yen Pei arrived in Xiamen to continue his studies at Minnan Buddhist Institute. He passed the entry examination and enrolled in the seminary. By the time Yen Pei became a student at Minnan Buddhist Institute, Venerable Changxing 常惺 had already succeeded Taixu as the rector of the seminary. Yen Pei studied a range of subjects taught at Minnan Buddhist Institute, including Buddhist studies, Chinese language, Japanese language, geography, history, among

[25] Ibid., 49-51.

others.[26] Yen Pei's teachers included Venerables Huijue 會覺, Huitong 慧童, Jichen 寄塵, and Japanese priest, Kanda Eun 神田惠雲.[27] The secular courses such as history and geography were taught by professors from the neighboring Xiamen University (*Xiamen daxue* 廈門大學).[28] At the seminary, Yen Pei made five close friends that came from Fujian, Guangdong, Taiwan, and Jiangsu, namely, Yuanzhuo 圓拙, Baihui 白慧, Miaoqin 妙欽, Daju 達居, and Daling 達靈. The six close friends called themselves "The Six Whites" (*liubai* 六白), each giving themselves a nickname that begins with the character "white" (*bai* 白).[29]

Yen Pei and his classmates had a pleasant learning experience at Minnan Buddhist Institute until an unfortunate incident occurred in the spring of 1936. According to Yen Pei, student-monks from the elementary program assaulted several students from the advanced class in the bathroom. Both sides blamed the other for the brawl. "The Six Whites" were greatly shaken by the ugly incident and decided to leave Minnan Buddhist Institute at the end of the semester. Subsequently, Baihui returned to Hong Kong, Yuanzhou headed back to his home monastery, and Daling decided to study Tiantai Buddhism in Hangzhou 杭州. Yen Pei, Miaoqin, and Daju transferred to

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[26] Ibid., 56.
[27] He was also known as 神田慧雲.
[28] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 56-58.
[29] The group played on the pun of "*bai*" as meaning "white," "pure," and "blank." Baihui retained his original name which means "pure wisdom," Miaoqin named himself Baiyun 白雲 (white clouds), Yuanzhuo called himself Baichi 白痴 (idiot), Daju 達居 named himself Baiyan 白岩 (white cliff), and Daling 達靈 gave himself Baijie 白傑 (pure hero), and Yen Pei called himself Baiyu 白愚 (pure stupidity). See Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 58-60.

Juejing Monastery (*Juejin si* 覺津寺) to study under the tutelage of Venerable Daxing (大醒, 1900-1952).[30] A close associate of Master Taixu, Venerable Daxing was the former director of academic affairs of Minnan Buddhist Institute and editor of the institute's periodical *Modern Sangha* (*Xiandai sengqie* 現代僧伽). After completing his tenure at Minnan Buddhist Institute, Daxing became the abbot of Juejing Monastery in Jiangsu province.[31]

In 1937, just when Yen Pei and his two friends were looking forward to beginning their studies at Juejing Monastery, the Sino-Japanese War broke out. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, Buddhist leaders such as Taixu and Yuanying mobilized young monks to support the war effort against the Japanese invaders. Like Chuk Mor, Yen Pei participated in the nationalist cause and received training to become a member of the Sangha ambulance unit (*Senglü jiuhu dui* 僧侶救護隊) in the resistance effort against Japanese invasion.[32] After completing his training, Yen Pei went to Guangfu Monastery (*Guangfu si* 廣福寺) in Wuxi 無錫 to attend Venerable Cihang's (慈航, 1895-1954) lecture series on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (*Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經). As the war began to spread to Wuxi, the Buddhist community evacuated the city. Yen Pei and several young monks followed Cihang to Changzhou 常州, and later, to Hankou 漢口 in the Hubei 湖北 province. Eventually, they took a train south to

[30] Ibid., 60-64.
[31] For a brief biography of Daxing, see Yinshun 印順, "Daxing fashi luezhuan 大醒法師略傳," *Haichao yin* 海潮音 34 (March 1953): 22.
[32] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 66-68.

safety in Hong Kong.[33] Yen Pei's former classmates, Miaoqin and Daju, soon joined them in the British colony on the Chinese periphery. After spending some time in Hong Kong, Yen Pei and his classmates Baihui, Miaoqin, Daju, and Wenhui 文慧 decided to go to Sino-Tibetan Institute (*Hanzang jiaoli yuan* 漢藏教理院) in Sichuan 四川 province of Southwest China.[34]

Yen Pei and his classmates stopped in Yunnan 雲南 en route to Sichuan. Coincidentally, when they were in Yunnan in 1939, they met Taixu who was residing at the Green Lake Buddhist Association (*Cuihu sheng fojiao hui* 翠湖省佛教會) in Kunming 昆明 after his trip to Southeast Asia. Taixu, who was then director of the Sino-Tibetan Institute, wrote them a letter of recommendation to support their further education.[35] After an arduous journey, Yen Pei and his classmates arrived in Sichuan and met with Venerable Fazun (法尊, 1902-1980), the acting director of the Sino-Tibetan Institute.[36] They were asked to take an entrance examination to determine

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[33] Ibid., 68-75.
[34] The Sino-Tibetan Institute was a Buddhist seminary was established in 1932 by General Liu Xiang 劉湘 with assistance from Taixu. The institute served as a seminary for the training of Chinese monks in Tibetan Buddhism and language. Venerable Fazun (法尊, 1902-1980), a former student of Taixu, was the director of the seminary for twelve of the institute's eighteen years of existence (1932-1949). During the Sino-Japanese War, a number of prominent monks fled from the East Coast to the Sino-Tibetan Institute in Sichuan. See Brenton Sullivan, "Venerable Fazun at the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies Institute (1932-1950) and Tibetan Geluk Buddhism in China," *Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 9 (2008): 199-241; Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhism and the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 122-126.
[35] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 78-79.
[36] Ibid., 81-81.

their competency level. Yen Pei and his classmates passed the examination and were exempted from taking regular classes; they were allowed to be auditors (*pangting sheng* 旁聽生) for any courses that interest them. Yen Pei attended lectures by Taixu, and audited a course on *Lamrim* (*Puti dao cidi guanglun* 菩提道次第廣論) by Fazun and a course on *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (*Jushe lun* 俱舍論) by Fafang 法舫.[37] In addition, he, together with Miaoqin and Wenhui, helped establish the Student-Monk Association (*xueseng hui* 學僧會) at the institute.[38]

Although renowned scholar and thinker, Master Yinshun (印順, 1906-2005), also resided at the Sino-Tibetan Institute, he was often away teaching in Guizhou 貴州 province. Yinshun, a former student of Taixu, was best known for bringing forth the ideas of Humanistic Buddhism and had a decisive influence on a new generation of monastic and laity in the second half of the twentieth century.[39] Yinshun was a classmate of Chuk Mor at the Minnan Buddhist Institute, where they both studied under the tutelage of Taixu. He later brought forth the concept of Humanistic Buddhism based on Taixu's ideas of Human-life Buddhism. Yinshun's Humanistic Buddhism was built upon Taixu's vision of Buddhist modernism and his own research on early Indian Buddhism. Drawing on the sources of early Buddhism such as the *Āgama* and the Mahāyāna sutras, and treatises especially those of Nāgārjuna, he

[37] Ibid., 86-92.
[38] Ibid., 99-101.
[39] On the different interpretations of Humanistic Buddhism in contemporary Taiwan, see Scott Pacey, "A Buddhism for the human world: Interpretations of *Renjian Fojiao* in contemporary Taiwan," *Asian Studies Review* 29 (December 2005): 445-461.

claimed that Buddhism in early India had degenerated when it became assimilated with theistic religions. Consequently, people misunderstood the Buddha as a deity and lost faith in their human potential for Buddhahood. Yinshun argued that since the Buddha attained enlightenment and taught the Dharma in the human-realm, one should practice the Dharma and strive to achieve Buddhahood in the human-realm. He believed that "Buddhism for the Human World" is the core the Buddhist teachings, and that a human should aspire to practice the "Bodhisattva Path" (*pusa dao* 菩薩道) of the "Great Vehicle" (*Dacheng* 大乘; Mahāyāna) to enter the "Buddha Vehicle" (*Focheng* 佛乘).[40] Yinshun published his ideas of Humanistic Buddhism in his treatise, *The Way to Buddhahood* (*Chengfo zhi dao* 成佛之道), which emphasized the uniqueness of the Mahāyāna and the practice of the bodhisattva path in the human-realm with the aim of attaining Buddhahood.[41]

In the spring of 1941, Taixu wrote to Yen Pei and his classmates suggesting that they should study with Yinshun. At the same time, he wrote to Yinshun requesting him to offer private instructions to the young student-monks. Subsequently, Yinshun taught a private course on the *Compendium of the Great Vehicle* (*She*

[40] Bhikkhu Bodhi, "Introduction," in Yinshun, *A Sixty-Year Spiritual Voyage on the Ocean of Dharma*, trans. Yu-Jung L. Avis, Po-Hui Chang, and Maxwell E. Siegel (Towaco: Noble Path, 2009), 19-23.
[41] See Yinshun 印順, *Chengfo zhi dao* 成佛之道 (Taipei: Zhengwen chubanshe, 1988); English translation available as Yinshun, *The Way to Buddhahood : Instructions from a Modern Chinese Master*, trans. Wing Yeung (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2012).

dacheng lun 攝大乘論) to Yen Pei, Miaoqin, and Wenhui.[42] A couple of months later, Taixu instructed Yen Pei to assist Yinshun with the establishment of the Dharma King Institute (*Fawang xueyuan* 法王學院) at the Dharma King Monastery (*Fawang si* 法王寺).[43] Yen Pei and Yinshun arrived at Dharma King Monastery in the fall of 1941. Yinshun was appointed as the chief advisor and Yen Pei as the director of academic affairs of the seminary. During his three-year tenure at Dharma King Institute, Yen Pei taught student-monks and handled some administrative duties.[44] At the same time, he took the opportunity to audit Yinshun's courses on the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing* 金剛經), *Buddhism in India* (*Yindu zhi fojiao* 印度之佛教), and *Verses on Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*Zhongguan lun song* 中觀論頌).[45] Following the closure of the Dharma King Institute, Yinshun returned to the Sino-Tibetan Institute, while Yen Pei taught courses at the Arhat Monastery (*Luohan si* 羅漢寺), and later, at the Ten Directions Hall (*Shifang tang* 十方堂).[46]

With the end of the Sino-Japanese War in September 1945, Yen Pei and his friends left Sichuan in the spring of 1946 to reunite with Taixu at the Jade Buddha

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[42] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 93-95.
[43] Ibid., 102-103.
[44] Ibid., 103-112.
[45] Yinshun was an important scholar of Madhyamaka (*Zhongguan* 中觀) philosophy in modern China. See Stefania Travagnin, *Yinshun and his Exposition of Madhyamaka: New Studies of the Da Zhidu Lun in Twentieth-century China and Taiwan*, forthcoming 2018.
[46] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 113-118.

Monastery in Shanghai.[47] A few months later, Taixu instructed Yen Pei and Miaoqin to teach at the Wulin Buddhist Institute (*Wulin foxue yuan* 武林佛學院) in Hangzhou 杭州. In the spring of 1947, Fazun and Yinshun came to visit and give lectures at Wulin Buddhist Institute. Shortly after, they received the news of Taixu's death. Yen Pei and Yinshun traveled to Shanghai to attend Taixu's funeral at the Jade Buddha Monastery.[48]. Yen Pei recalled that when he returned to teach in Hangzhou, he spoke to his students about Taixu's contributions to the reform of Chinese Buddhism, and the master's vow to "revive Buddhism and to use the Buddha-dharma to save China and the world" (*fuxing fojiao, yi fofa jiu zhongguo, jiu shijie* 復興佛教，以佛法救中國、救世界). He encouraged his students to study hard and contribute to the revival of Buddhism.[49]

Yen Pei's early monastic education and training were crucial in shaping his religious career. He acquired a broad range of knowledge from several prominent Buddhist seminaries of the time, including Guanzong Monastery, Minnan Buddhist Institute, and Sino-Tibetan Institute. More importantly, Yen Pei had the fortune of studying under the tutelage of numerous Buddhist scholars, including Taixu, Yinshun Cihang, Fafang, and Fazun. Yen Pei's subsequent teaching tenure at the Dharma King Institute not only gave him the opportunity to learn from Yinshun, but also to acquire

[47] Ibid., 127-134.
[48] Ibid., 138-144.
[49] Ibid., 144.

teaching experience that helped his subsequent career. The two monks became close friends, and later, were to spend the next decade together in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

From Refugee Monk to Temple Abbot: Yen Pei in Taiwan

Following the Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese Civil War between the Communist and Kuomintang broke out and soon spread to the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions. Yen Pei considered the Communist's rejection of religion a danger and decided to flee south to Fujian.[50] In the spring of 1949, he left for Xiamen to join Yinshun at the Nanputuo Monastery (*Nanputuo si* 南普陀寺) who got there earlier to set up the Great Enlightenment Lecture Hall (*Dajue jiangshe* 大覺講舍). However, shortly after his arrival, the Civil War spread to Fujian province with the eventual Communist victory, and the Kuomintang's Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo* 中華民國) evacuated to Taiwan.[51] Consequently, Yen Pei and numerous Chinese monks sought refuge in the British colony of Hong Kong.[52]

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[50] Ibid., 155.

[51] The Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo* 中華民國), originally from mainland China, governs Taiwan after Kuomintang's defeat and enforced retreat to Taiwan in 1949. After Kuomintang's retreat to Taiwan, countries from the Western Bloc recognized the Republic of China as China. However, following the UN Resolution 2758 (October 25, 1971), the United Nations recognized People's Republic of China as the sole representative of China in the intergovernmental organization. With the US-China Rapprochement in 1972, many countries gradually switched their recognition of China from the Republic of China to the People's Republic of China.

[52] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 159; Yinshun also fled to Hong Kong separately with Xuming 續明, Changjue 常覺, Guangfan 廣範, and Chuan(?) 傳 X. See Yinshun 印順, *Pingfan de yisheng* 平凡的一生 (Hsinchu: Zhengwen chubanshe, 2013), 43-44.

When Yen Pei arrived in Hong Kong, he temporarily resided at Nam Tin Chuk (*Nantianzhu* 南天竺) while seeking news of Yinshun and his friends. He later learned that Yinshun had arrived in Hong Kong and was residing at the Hong Kong Buddhist Association (*Xianggang fojiao lianhe hui* 香港佛教聯合會) in Wan Chai (*Wanzai* 灣仔). After the death of Taixu, Yinshun took on the responsibility of editing and publishing the *Collected Works of Taixu* (*Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虛大師全書). Yen Pei and Xuming (續明, 1918-1966) assisted with the editorial work, and especially, with the copy editing of *Chronicle of Taixu's Life* (*Taixu daoshi nianpu* 太虛大師年譜).[53] Yinshun, in his spare time, taught *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* (*Dacheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論), *Śrīmālā Sūtra* (*Shengman jing* 勝鬘經), and *New Treatise on the Pure Land* (*Jingtu xinlun* 淨土新論) to the Buddhist community in Hong Kong.[54] During their sojourn in Hong Kong, Yen Pei and his fellow refugee monks had to relocate a couple of times. Eventually, Yinshun, together with Yen Pei, Xuming, Changjue 常覺, and Guangfan 廣範, decided to set up the Fuyan Vihāra (*Fuyan jingshe* 福嚴精舍) as their permanent residence in Hong Kong.[55] However, in 1952, before the Fuyan Vihāra was established, Yen Pei was invited to direct the Taiwan Buddhist Workshop (*Taiwan fojiao jiangxihui* 台灣佛教講習會) at the Lingyin Monastery (*Lingyin si* 靈隱寺) in Hsinchu (*Xinzhu* 新竹), Taiwan.

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[53] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 161-162.
[54] Yen Pei and Xuming recorded the lectures and subsequently published them. Ibid.,163-165.
[55] Yinshun, *Pingfan de yisheng*, 59-60. Miaoqin, who was then based in the Philippines, provided the funds for setting up the vihāra.

Between spring of 1952 and winter of 1954, Yen Pei taught student monastics at the Taiwan Buddhist Workshop.[56] The Buddhist studies workshop, which was originally based in Lingyin Monastery in Hsinchu, due to the lack of funds, was relocated to the Shandao Monastery (*Shandao si* 善導寺) in Taipei (*Taibei* 台北) in the spring of 1953. During his teaching tenure, Yen Pei took the opportunity to learn Japanese language with his students under Elder Guan (*Guan lao* 關老), a former professor of Japanese at Zhongshan University (*Zhongshan daxue* 中山大學). Yen Pei soon acquired good reading knowledge of Japanese and translated Japanese Buddhologist Kimura Taiken's (木村泰賢, 1881-1930) *Treatise on Mahāyāna Buddhist Thoughts* (*Daijō bukkyō shisō ron* 大乘仏教思想論) into Chinese. He later published the translated book in 1954.[57]

Shortly after Yen Pei arrived in Taiwan in 1952, Yinshun was invited by the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (*Zhongguo fojiao hui* 中國佛教會) to attend at the Second World Buddhist Fellowship Conference in Japan. After the conference, Yinshun stopped in Taiwan to obtain an exit permit to return to Hong Kong. At that time, Yinshun had already purchase a plot of land to build the Fuyan Vihāra in Hong Kong. However, as Yinshun was unable to obtain an exit permit to leave Taiwan, elder Li Zikuan (李子寬, 1882-1973), a lay disciple of Taixu and leader

[56] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 187-190.
[57] Ibid., 177-181. See Kimura Taiken 木村泰賢, *Dacheng fojiao sixiang lun* 大乘佛教思想論, trans. Yen Pei 演培 (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye youxian gongsi, 1989).

of the Shandao Monastery, requested him to stay in Taipei.[58] Yen Pei, too, wished that Yinshun could stay and propagate the Dharma in Taiwan.[59] In the end, Yinshun joined Yen Pei and taught at the Taiwan Buddhist Workshop in Lingyin Monastery in Hsinchu. Unable to return to Hong Kong, Yinshun decided to construct the Fuyan Vihāra in Taiwan. With the help of Lingyin Monastery, Yinshun found a plot of land in Hsinchu to build the Fuyan Vihāra.[60] The construction project started in the summer of 1953 and was completed in the fall of 1954. An opening ceremony was held later in the year.[61]

Figure 3.1: Yen Pei (front row, fifth from the left) with Yinshun (front row, fourth from the left) at the Fuyan Vihāra, circa 1950s. Source: Yinshun, *Pingfan de yisheng*, 119.

[58] Li Zikuan was also known as Li Hongji 李基鴻.
[59] Ibid., 191.
[60] Yinshun, *Pingfan de yisheng*, 60-62.
[61] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 187-190.

Following the end of his teaching tenure, Yen Pei moved to stay and study with Yinshun at the newly opened Fuyan Vihāra. Soon after, Yinshun's associates and former students (who were also Yen Pei's friends), Yinhai 印海, Weici 唯慈, Miaofeng 妙峰, Huansheng 幻生, and Guozong 果宗, and later, Xuming and Renjun 仁俊, came to reside and study at the vihāra. Given Yinshun's interest in early Indian Buddhist texts, he started a study group on the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (*Jushe lun* 俱舍論) for the resident monks.[62] The vibrant and engaging academic community inspired Yen Pei to complete his book *Lectures on the Verses of Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (*Jushe lunsong jiangji* 俱舍論頌講記).[63] In his autobiography, Yen Pei recalled memories of his time at Fuyan Vihāra:

> Although Fuyan Vihāra was newly established, it had already become a small [but] high quality academic organization. This was because the monastics that gathered here already had considerable understanding of the Buddha-dharma, and they were considered the young intellectual talents of the Buddhist community. Because they congregated here to learn from teacher [Yinshun], some senior monks thought that Yinshun's influence expanded and became worried.[64]

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[62] The *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, an important Sanskrit text on the abhidharma written by Vasubandhu (*Shiqin* 世親) between the fourth and fifth century.
[63] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 191-194.
[64] Ibid., 193.

Yen Pei's recollections not only highlighted his pleasant learning experience at Fuyan Vihāra, but also the tensions within the Buddhist community in Taiwan. Yinshun's ideas of Humanistic Buddhism and his provocative viewpoints were frowned upon by the conservative Buddhist monks in Taiwan. While some disagreed with his ideas, other were jealous of his influence and popularity among prominent Buddhist scholars and young student-monks.

When Yinshun first came to Taiwan in 1952, Li Zikuan quickly made him an advisor of Shandao Monastery, a prominent temple located in the Taipei city. Shortly after, he became the abbot of the monastery on the third month of 1956, with Yen Pei, Xuming, and Wuyi 悟一, each agreed to serve a year as the superintendent (*jianyuan* 監院).[65] But a year later, Yinshun decided to resign as the abbot of the Shandao Monastery "for reasons [he] would not disclose as it would affect harmonious relationship" (*shi buneng shuo de, shuo le hui youshang heqi* 是不能說的，說了會有傷和氣) to focus on the academic development of Fuyan Vihāra.[66] During that time, Li Zikuan was making arrangements for Yen Pei to further his studies in Japan.[67] Yet, with the vacancy in the abbacy, Li Zikuan decided to make Yen Pei the abbot of Shandao Monastery.[68]

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[65] Yinshun, *Pingfan de yisheng*, 94-101.
[66] Ibid., 101.
[67] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 223-224.
[68] Ibid., 225-226.

Yen Pei served as the abbot of Shandao Monastery between 1957 and 1960. He remembered that his three-year tenure was an unpleasant one. In his autobiography, he wrote that Shandao Monastery's superintendent, Wuyi, was ambitious and tried to seize control of the monastery. At the beginning, Wuyi appeared capable and responsible as the superintendent. However, after Yen Pei returned from his three-month Dharma propagation trip to Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam between June and August 1958, he realized that the monastery was in a "huge mess" (*daluan* 大亂).[69] He found out that resident monastics at the temple neither meet for the morning prayers nor eat their meals together. In fact, Yen Pei noticed that the superintendent and some monks were still sleeping after breakfast hours.[70] He was deeply "disappointed" and "embarrassed" with the lack of discipline at the Shandao Monastery that continued until the end of his abbacy. When his three-year term was up, Yen Pei stepped down as more drama unfolded at the Shandao Monastery.[71]

In sum, the Chinese Civil War and the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 saw an exodus of many Buddhist monastics from mainland China fearing communist persecution. These refugee monks consisted of highly respected, eminent monks from Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, as well as the younger and less-

[69] Yen Pei published an account of his first visit to Southeast Asia under the title *Nantian youhua* 南天遊化 (Taipei: Tianhua, 1990). See also Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 277-299.
[70] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 232-235.
[71] See ibid., 243-260.

distinguished ones.[72] While some fled to the European colonies of Hong Kong and Macau on the Chinese periphery, others followed the evacuation of Kuomintang's Republic of China to Taiwan. Because of the mass migration of Buddhist monastics to Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, the Chinese periphery emerged as the Buddhist "cultural China," to borrow Tu Wei-ming's term, whereby the Chinese periphery became the center for Chinese Buddhism.[73] Yen Pei, too, first escaped to Hong Kong, before leaving to teach in Taiwan shortly after. He was later joined by his teacher, Yinshun, as well as many of his friends and associates. During his decade-long sojourn in Taiwan, Yen Pei directed the Taiwan Buddhist Workshop and taught Buddhist doctrines to student-monks. This provided him valuable teaching experience that he would later bring with him to Southeast Asia. After completing his teaching tenure, Yen Pei was planning to further his studies in Japan. However, an unexpected turn of events saw him being appointed as the abbot of Shandao Monastery. Yen Pei's three-year tenure as the abbot was an unpleasant one where he had to deal with disappointment, ill-disciplined monks, and temple politics. It was probably because of this negative experience that Yen Pei considers himself as "a person unsuited to be an abbot" (*wo bushi zhuchi ren* 我不是住持人). As Yen Pei points out in his autobiography, his peers often claim that "Yen Pei is one who preaches the scriptures,

[72] Charles Brewer Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660-1990* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 105.
[73] Tu Wei-ming, "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center," *Daedalus* 120, 2 (Spring 1991): 1-32.

not one who handles affairs" (*Yanpei shi jiangjing de ren, bushi zuoshi de ren* 演培是講經的人, 不是做事的人).[74]

During his stay in Taiwan, Yen Pei was able to advance his education. He learned Japanese language together with his students at the Taiwan Buddhist Workshop. Yen Pei became sufficiently proficient in the language that he translated Kimura Taiken's *Treatise on Mahāyāna Buddhist Thoughts* from Japanese to Chinese. He also benefitted from a vibrant student-Sangha community at Fuyan Vihāra where he completed his *Lectures on the Verses of Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*. He continued to learn from Yinshun by auditing his classes at the Taiwan Buddhist Workshop, and later on, at the Fuyan Vihāra. His close student-teacher friendship with Yinshun was highlighted in Yinshun's autobiography:

> [Yen Pei] is the one who lived with me the longest! From forty-second year (1953) to the summer of forty-sixth year (1957), when I was ill or not around, he was the one who took care of the affairs at Fuyan Vihāra and Shandao Monastery. He was the one who helped me the most! I usually judge people based on ordinary standard (*pingfan de biaozhun* 平凡的標準); Yen Pei has commendable strengths. He is warmhearted. In order to publish [my book] *Buddhism in India* (*Yindu zhi fojiao* 印度之佛教), he contributed his only savings. [Yen Pei] used the profits

[74] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 227.

> from the sales of [his translated book] *Treatise on Mahāyāna Buddhist Thoughts* (*Daijō bukkyō shisō ron* 大乘仏教思想論) to support the building expansion funds of Fuyan Vihāra. He is thrifty, but is never stingy towards [promoting the] Dharma or helping others. He is a good speaker and has a great voice. Therefore, [when he] propagated the Dharma overseas, [he experienced] good affinity everywhere (*daochu youyuan* 到處有緣). [Yen Pei] has deep understanding of the Buddha-dharma. If [he] could single-heartedly teach (*yixin jiaoxue* 一心教學), teach others as he teaches himself (*jiaoxue xiangzhang* 教學相長), and occasionally goes abroad to preach the Buddha-dharma, this would be most ideal.[75]

Yen Pei considered himself one of the principal disciples of Yinshun and an advocate of the ideas of Humanistic Buddhism. His respect and veneration towards his teacher is revealed in the preface of his autobiography. He admired the scholarly achievements of Yinshun and felt ashamed of his inadequacy:

> If someone asks me, "You studied under Master Yinshun for so long, and also studied the Buddha-dharma for a period of time, why have you not discover your own trend of thoughts (*sixiang luxian* 思想路線)? Besides feeling ashamed, I can only reply, "I not only have not discover

[75] Yinshun, *Pingfan de yisheng*, 145.

> my own line of thoughts, but also have not clearly understood Master Yinshun's theoretical thoughts (*sixiang lilun* 思想理論). If [I] can understand Master Yinshun's teachings, and promote Master Yinshun's ideas without mistake, I will feel perfectly content. How would I dare to falsely proclaim my unique ideas? What a wise "practitioner with direct apprehension of the doctrine" (*faxing ren* 法行人) can achieve, how can I this ordinary and foolish monk (*fanyu seng* 凡愚僧) achieve?[76]

During Yen Pei's tenure as the abbot of Shandao Monastery, he went abroad to Southeast Asia for the first time in 1958. Afterwards, he made two more trips to Southeast Asia in 1961 and 1964. Yen Pei played a significant role in spreading the ideas of Humanistic Buddhism to the overseas Chinese communities and in fostering interactions between Chinese Mahāyāna and Southeast Asian Theravāda Buddhist communities. The following sections will discuss his southern missionary expeditions to Southeast Asia, and his eventual decision to migrate and settle in Singapore.

Journey to the South: Yen Pei's Visits to Southeast Asia

After Yen Pei became the abbot of Shandao Monastery in the spring of 1957, he was preoccupied with giving talks at his own monastery and at other temples around Taiwan, as well as teaching at the Women's Buddhist Institute (*Nüzhong foxue*

[76] Ibid., 2-3.

yuan 女眾佛學院) in Hsinchu. The thought of traveling abroad did not cross his mind.[77] However, shortly after assuming the abbacy, Yen Pei received an invitation from the chairman of Thailand's Dragon-Flower Buddhist Society (*Longhua fojiao she* 龍華佛教社), Ma Ziming 馬子鳴, requesting him to officiate the third-year celebratory anniversary of the erection of Taixu's relic stūpa and to lecture on the scriptures. In his letter, Ma Ziming highlighted his respect towards the Sangha and expressed his wishes to propagate the "true Dharma" (*zhengfa* 正法). At the same time, Yen Pei received several letters from Chen Jingtao 陳靜濤, an elderly lay Buddhist leader from Hong Kong, persuading him to make a Dharma propagation trip to Thailand.[78] Despite his busy schedule in Taiwan, Yen Pei accepted the invitation. In his autobiography, Yen Pei explained two reasons behind his decision to visit Southeast Asia:

> The first reason for going [to Thailand] is to lecture on the scriptures at the third-year celebratory anniversary of the erection of Master [Taixu]'s relic stūpa. This can commemorate Master [Taixu]'s sublime virtues (*shengde* 盛德), and also allow the [overseas] Chinese and the Thai people to have a better knowledge of Master [Taixu], especially so for the Thais to be aware of the great eminent monk in [the history of] modern Chinese Buddhism. This is to prevent the misconception that there is no [eminent monk] in Chinese Buddhism. The second reason is

[77] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 277.
[78] Yen Pei, *Nantian youhua*, 6-7.

> that Thailand considers Buddhism as its national religion and is a country with the most comprehensive Sangha community among the Southern Buddhist countries (*nanchuan fojiao guojia* 南傳佛教國家). By observing the current situation of their Buddhism, [I hope to] see if there are any ways that our nation's Buddhism can learn from. This is indeed a rare opportunity![79]

Shortly before leaving for Thailand, Yen Pei received a letter from Venerable Chaochen 超塵 in Vietnam, informing him that the overseas Chinese community in Vietnam wished to invite him to deliver several lectures in Vietnam after his trip to Thailand. At the same time, Venerables Faliang 法亮 and Shengyang 聖揚 also requested him to stopover Cambodia. Yen Pei saw these as opportunities to propagate the Dharma, as well as to visit sacred Buddhist sites in Southeast Asia. He accepted the invitations and embarked on his first ever visit to the three mainland Southeast Asian states of Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam.[80]

In the morning of April 30, 1958, Yen Pei left Taiwan for Thailand via Hong Kong. Yen Pei arrived in Hong Kong at noon and was received at the Hong Kong Airport by Venerable Youtan 優曇, Chen Jingtao, and some ten Buddhists. He visited a few senior monks, and paid homage to Taixu's relics at Nam Tin Chuk, the

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[79] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 278.
[80] Yen Pei, *Nantian youhua*, 6-7.

monastery where he resided when he first fled China for Hong Kong. On May 3, Yen Pei left Hong Kong for Thailand.[81]

When Yen Pei arrived in Bangkok, some three hundred Thai Chinese received him at the Don Mueang Airport. They welcomed him with a banner reading "Welcome Venerable Yen Pei's arrival in Thailand to propagate the Dharma" (*huanying Yanpei fashi litai hongfa* 歡迎演培法師蒞泰弘法). Ma Ziming, chairman of Dragon-Flower Buddhist Society, received Yen Pei at the airport and drove him to the Buddhist temple.[82] When Yen Pei arrived at the Dragon-Flower Buddhist Society, he paid reverence to the images of the Buddha, Avalokiteśvara, as well as Taixu's relics, and was welcomed by a children's choir singing "Song of the Triple Gems" (*Sanbao ge* 三寶歌).[83] During his stay in Thailand, Yen Pei lectured on the *Sumati-dārikā-paripṛcchā Sūtra* (*Miaohui tongnü jing* 妙慧童女經) to the Chinese community in Thailand. However, as most of the Teochew dialect-speaking Thai Chinese could not understand Yen Pei's Jiangsu accented mandarin, Chen Muchan 陳慕禪 translated Yen Pei's lecture into Teochew, which Yen Pei recalled, was poorly translated.[84]

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[81] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 280.
[82] Ibid., 281-282.
[83] "Song of the Triple Gems" is a Buddhist anthem that was produced during the Republican period. Taixu wrote the lyrics and Hongyi wrote the music. See Francesca Tarocco, *The Cultural Practices of Modern Chinese Buddhism: Attuning the Dharma* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 19.
[84] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 282.

Figure 3.2: The Thai Buddhist Community Welcomed the Arrival of Yen Pei (front row, sixth from the right) at the Airport, 1958. Source: *Xinlu*, 119.

In addition to giving Dharma lectures, Yen Pei called on the Thai Supreme Patriarch, four officials from the Religious Affairs Department, as well as Hang Liwu 杭立武, the Republic of China's ambassador to Thailand. He also visited numerous Buddhist temples, societies, and charity organizations. The highlight of his trip, however, was probably Yen Pei's lecture and dialogue with the Thai Theravāda Buddhist community. According to him, many Theravāda Buddhists were skeptical of the authenticity of Mahāyāna teachings and there were very little interactions between Thai Theravāda and Chinese Mahāyāna monastics in Thailand. Therefore, when Yen Pei was invited to speak at a Dhammayuttika Nikaya Buddhist university (*Fazong pai fojiao daxue* 法宗派佛教大學), he was pleased with the opportunity to lecture to the

Thai Buddhist community.[85] Yen Pei gave a lecture entitled "The differences and similarities of the three systems of Mahāyāna Buddhism" (*Dacheng fojiao sanxi yitong* 大乘佛教三系異同) to approximately five hundred Thai student-monks from the university.[86] His lecture was translated from Chinese to Thai by Professor Chen Mingde 陳明德, a faculty member from the university. A few days later, Yen Pei was invited to a debate and discussion panel on the doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhism. He was joined by prominent Thai monk Buddhadāsa, treatise academician Kunshe 坤攝, and lay Buddhist scholar Lü Qingshui 呂清水.[87] In the three-hour event, Buddhadāsa raised questions on the fundamentals of Mahāyāna Buddhism; Kunshe enquired on the abhidharma; and Lü Qingshui probed the Chinese monastic practices of handling money, eating after midday, and burning of joss paper. Yen Pei responded to the questions and clarified the position of Mahāyāna regarding these issues.[88]

After spending thirty-four days in Thailand, Yen Pei departed Thailand for Cambodia. When Yen Pei arrived at the Phnom Penh airport, he was received by

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[85] Yen Pei did not state the name of this "Dhammayuttika Nikaya Buddhist university." My guess is that it could be either the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University or the Mahamakut Buddhist University.

[86] The "Three Systems of Mahāyāna Buddhism" (*Dacheng fojiao sanxi* 大乘佛教三系) are "empty in nature-name only" (*xingkong weiming* 性空唯名), "delusion-consciousness-only" (*xuwang weishi* 虛妄唯識), and "real and eternal-mind-only" (*zhenchang weixin* 真常唯心).

[87] Buddhadāsa (1906-1993) was an influential scholar-monk in twentieth century Thailand. For biographies of Buddhadāsa, see, for instance, Peter A. Jackson, *Buddhadāsa: Theravada Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2003); Tomomi Ito, *Modern Thai Buddhism and Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu: A Social History* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012).

[88] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 283-284.

Venerables Faliang and Shengyang, with some three hundred overseas Chinese in Cambodia. Although Yen Pei had not met Venerables Faliang and Shengyang previously, he had read their articles from Taiwan's Buddhist periodicals and learned about their religious activities in Cambodia. The following day, Faliang and Shengyang accompanied Yen Pei to meet, Liao Zhongqin 廖仲琴, Republic of China's ambassador to Cambodia. According to Yen Pei, Ambassador Liao, was a "devout Buddhist that respects that the Sangha." The ambassador consulted Yen Pei on how to "protect Buddhism" (*weihu fojiao* 維護佛教) and to strengthen one's faith in the religion. Thereafter, Yen Pei lectured on the *Sutra on the Eight Kinds of Attentiveness of Great Persons* (*Ba daren jue jing* 八大人覺經) for three days at the Correct Awakening Monastery (*Zhengjue si* 正覺寺).[89] On June 20, 1958, he left Cambodia for Vietnam for the final leg of his mainland Southeast Asia lecture tour.

Yen Pei arrived in Saigon on a rainy afternoon. According to Yen Pei's autobiography, Vietnam Buddhist Federation's (*Yuenan foxue zonghui* 越南佛教總會) chairman, Mei Shouchuan 枚寿傳, leader of the overseas Chinese Buddhist community, Venerable Chaochen, and approximately a thousand devotees from thirty-five Buddhist organizations and twenty-four Buddhist groups welcomed him at the airport despite the heavy downpour.[90] He was then driven to the newly built Śarīra

[89] Ibid., 286-287.
[90] For studies on Buddhism in twentieth century Vietnam, see for instance, Shawn Frederick McHale, *Print and Power: Confucianism, Communism, and Buddhism in the Making of Modern Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004);

Monastery (*Sheli si* 舍利寺) for a welcome reception. The following day, Yen Pei paid a call on Yuan Zijian 袁子健, the Republic of China's ambassador to Vietnam. He also visited the Vietnam Buddhist Federation located at Yinguang Monastery (*Yinguang si* 印光寺). On June 22, 1958, Yen Pei gave a two-hour lecture entitled "The Unique Superiority of Mahāyāna Buddhism" (*Dacheng fojiao de tesheng* 大乘佛教的特勝) at the Śarīra Monastery. He recalled that his talk was well attended, and the local journalists called him the "Mahāyāna Dharma teacher" (*Dacheng fashi* 大乘法師). After giving a five-day lecture series at Śarīra Monastery and stopping by the overseas Chinese business association (*shanghui* 商會), Yen Pei, accompanied by Chaochen and several lay Buddhists, visited other parts of Vietnam, including Huế, Nha Trang, and Đà Lạt. While there, he gave several Dharma lectures and met with the overseas Chinese community in Vietnam. After spending about a month and a half in Vietnam, Yen Pei returned to Taiwan in the morning of August 3, 1958.[91]

Yen Pei's first trip to Southeast Asia in 1958 was significant in two ways. First, his visit contributed to the interactions between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhist communities in Southeast Asia. Yen Pei not only visited prominent Theravāda monks and lay Buddhists in Thailand and Cambodia, but also engaged them in dialogues and discussions about the differences in the doctrines of the two major Buddhist traditions. The interactions between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism can be understood in

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Alexander Duncan Soucy, *The Buddha Side: Gender, Power, and Buddhist Practice in Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012).

[91] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 288-298.

the broader context of trans-Asian Buddhist interactions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[92] Yen Pei later compiled and published a detailed record of his trip titled *Teaching [the Dharma] in the South* (*Nantian youhua* 南天遊化) in 1959. His travel writing contains valuable information on the lectures he delivered, the people he met, and the places he visited. Above all, it reveals his personal insights from his interactions with Theravāda monks and lay Buddhists in Thailand and Cambodia, as well as the Mahāyāna Buddhist community in Vietnam. Second, and more importantly, Yen Pei's trip gave him the opportunity to promote the ideas of Humanistic Buddhism to the overseas Chinese community in Vietnam, and strengthened the networks—or Dharmic affinity (*fayuan* 法緣) as he called it—between Buddhist modernists in Taiwan and in Vietnam. Since the 1920s, Vietnamese Buddhist reformers sought to "revive" the religion by drawing on Taixu's ideas to modernize and systematize Sangha education and temple administration, encourage religious publishing, promote social work, and establish Buddhist lay organizations to meet the demands of the modern world.[93] Therefore, it came as no surprise that Yen Pei had "special Dharmic affinity" (*fayuan tesheng* 法緣特盛) with the Vietnamese Buddhist community. Two years later, he was again invited to visit Vietnam.[94]

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[92] See, for instance, Richard M. Jaffe, "Seeking Śākyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 30, 1 (Winter 2004): 65-96; Wenxue Zhang, "Interactions between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism in Colonial Singapore" (paper presented at the Theravada Buddhism Under Colonialism: Adaptation and Response Conference, Singapore, May 24-25, 2010).
[93] Elise A. DeVido, "The Influence of Chinese Master Taixu on Buddhism in Vietnam," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 10 (2009): 413-458.
[94] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 299-300.

On December 8, 1960, Yen Pei left Taiwan for his second Dharma propagation trip to Southeast Asia. This time, he visited Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand, and for the first time, the maritime Southeast Asian states of Malaya and Singapore. Yen Pei arrived at his first destination, Vietnam, to officiate the consecration ceremony of the Buddha images at the Wondrous Dharma Vihāra (*Miaofa jingshe* 妙法精舍) on the New Year's day of 1961. The following day, he met with Vietnamese monks who were working on the "revival of Buddhism" (*fuxing fojiao* 復興佛教) in Vietnam. Yen Pei encouraged the Vietnamese monks to "unite the Buddhist community" for the gradual revival of Buddhism. He also advised them "not to rush into matters."[95] Thereafter, he gave a series of Dharma talks at various Buddhist and Chinese temples in Saigon. The most memorable one was probably his lecture to young student-monks at Yinguang Monastery.[96] Yen Pei recalled that the young monks were socially active in defending Buddhism (*hujiao* 護教) against Catholic domination under the Ngô Đình Diệm government.[97] His talk was translated by Thích Nhất Hạnh (Yixing 一行, 1926-), whom he remembered was "learned and knowledgeable."[98] After spending

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[95] Ibid., 300-301.
[96] Ibid., 305-306.
[97] Ngô Đình Diệm (1901-1963) was the president of South Vietnam from 1955 to 1963. His pro-Catholic policies provoked the Buddhist population during his presidency. The religious tension eventually led to 1963 Buddhist crisis in South Vietnam. See Edward Miller, "Religious Revival and the Politics of Nation Building: Reinterpreting the 1963 'Buddhist crisis' in South Vietnam," *Modern Asian Studies* 49, 6 (November 2015): 1903-1962.
[98] Thích Nhất Hạnh (1926-) is a renowned Vietnamese Buddhist monk best known for his peace activist and for coining the term "Engaged Buddhism." For a brief study of Thích Nhất Hạnh's ideas of Engaged Buddhism, see for instance, Sallie B. King, "Thich Nhat Hanh and the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam: Nondualism in Action," in *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*, ed.

three months in Saigon, Yen Pei was still unable to obtain his visa to Laos, he decided to visit Đà Nẵng and Hội An in Central Vietnam, upon suggestions from some Vietnamese Buddhist devotees.[99] Following his trip to Central Vietnam, he lectured on the *Emptiness Chapter of the Golden Light Sūtra* (*Jin guangming jing kongpin* 金光明經空品) at the Wondrous Dharma Vihāra before collecting his visa to enter Laos in the April of 1961.[100]

After a three-hour flight from Saigon, Yen Pei accompanied by his Vietnamese friend Chaochen, arrived in Vientiane on April 22, 1961. They were received by the Republic of China's consul, Liao Dezhen 廖德珍, a representative from Lao's Religious Affairs Department, two Laotian monks, and some eighty devotees. For the first few days of his visits, Yen Pei called upon several prominent Buddhist monasteries and seminaries in Laos, and was impressed with the monastic education system in the country. On April 24, he was invited to give several Dharma lectures to the Buddhist community in Laos. Yen Pei recalled that his talks given in Mandarin Chinese were translated into Teochew dialect for the benefit of the Teochew Chinese community, but neither the Lao monks nor the non-Teochew speaking Laotian Chinese could understand. As a result, more than half of his audience left in the middle of his talk.[101] Yen Pei considered his weeklong Dharma propagation trip to

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Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 321-363.
[99] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 307-309.
[100] Ibid., 311-314.
[101] Ibid., 315-318.

Laos "a great failure" (*da shibai* 大失敗) because "it was not the case that no one wants to listen to the scriptures, but there was no translator."[102]

On April 28, 1961, Yen Pei and Chaochen arrived in Thailand with much fanfare, where they were greeted by Venerable Jinghai 淨海 and several Thai Chinese monks, representatives from the Buddhist Association of Thailand and Republic of China embassy, as well as some two hundred members of the Dragon-Flower Buddhist Society. The following day, Yen Pei participated in the twenty-seven year anniversary celebration of the establishment of Dragon-Flower Buddhist Society cum eight-year anniversary of the consecration of Taixu's relic stupa. He then visited the Republic of China's ambassador, Hang Liwu, the supreme patriarch of Thailand, as well as several senior Thai and Thai-Chinese monks.[103] On his fifth day in Thailand, Yen Pei taught the *Emptiness Chapter of the Golden Light Sūtra*, which he lectured earlier in Vietnam, to the Thai Chinese community. Huang Jinliang 黃謹良, a lecturer from the Chinese Buddhist Research Society (*Zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she* 中華佛教研究社) translated his talk into Teochew. Thereafter, Yen Pei was invited to speak at the Maha Nikāya Buddhist University (*Dazong pai fojiao daxue* 大宗派佛教大學) and the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (*Zhulalonggong fojiao daxue* 朱拉隆功佛教大學). Yen Pei's lectures were translated into Thai by Professor Chen Mingde

[102] Ibid., 320.
[103] Ibid., 321-326.

whom he became acquainted during his first visit.[104] Besides giving Dharma lectures, Yen Pei visited several places of attraction including Wat Phra Phutthabat (also known as the "temple of Buddha's footprint"), Ayutthaya historic city, the Grand Palace, as well as Wat Arun.[105] After spending about a month in Thailand, he was to make his first visit to the maritime Southeast Asian states of Singapore and Malaya (*Xingma* 星馬).[106]

First Visit to Malaya and Singapore

On May 25, 1961, Yen Pei left Thailand to continue his travels in Malaya and Singapore. Unlike the mainland Southeast Asian states of Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam which have a majority Buddhist population, Malaya has a predominant Malay Muslim population. Singapore, on the other hand, has a Chinese majority population and larger Buddhist presence, which I will discuss later. Yen Pei had a strong network of monastic teachers and friends in Malaya and Singapore, and therefore, was delighted to pay them a visit:

> Following the end of the Second War World, Venerable Cihang built monastic dormitories (*fashi liao* 法師寮) in Singapore for young

[104] Ibid., 326-333.
[105] Ibid., 337-338.
[106] Prior to the separation and independence of Singapore in 1965, Chinese speakers often referred to Singapore (*Xingjiapo* 星加坡) and Malaya (*Malaiya* 馬來亞) as "*Xingma*" (星馬) because of their shared colonial history and proximity.

> monastics from various places to reside in, to read the Tripiṭaka, and to practice [the Dharma]. I intended to visit, but the karmic condition was not ripe, [and thus I was] unable to do so. Although [I] had not been to Singapore and Malaya (at that time [the name] was not yet changed to Malaysia), I knew especially many teachers and friends [who were there], and very much hope to visit and learn [from them]. Venerable Long[gen] (隆根, 1921-2011)[107] did not want to be neglected by the inviter, and left Taiwan to reside in Singapore and Malaya. [When Longgen] knew that Venerable Chao[chen] and I embarked on our Dharma propagation trip to Laos and Thailand, [he] invited us to make a trip to Singapore and Malaya, and hence the opportunity to visit.[108]

Yen Pei recalled that it was not difficult to obtain a travel permit to enter Singapore and Malaya. After obtaining their travel documents, Yen Pei and Chaochen left Thailand for Penang on May 25. Prior to the journey to Penang, Yen Pei informed Longgen of their date of arrival, requested for an English or Malay language translator,

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[107] Venerable Longgen (隆根, 1921-2011) was one of the prominent Chinese migrant monks in Singapore during the second half of the twentieth century. He studied under the tutelage of Taixu and Yinshun during his early monastic training. Longgen later became a close associate of both Chuk Mor and Yen Pei. He left mainland China for Hong Kong in 1949, where he worked with Chuk Mor on the *Inexhaustible Lamp* periodical. After staying in Hong Kong for eight years, he went to Taiwan in 1956. He resided at Fuyan Vihāra, and later at the Shandao Monastery, where he served as an editor for *Sound of the Sea Tide* periodical. Longgen went to Penang in 1960 and subsequently decided to settle permanently in Singapore. See Longgen's autobiography *Qisi zishu Fu bashi zaishu* 七十自述 附八十再述 (Singapore: Nanyang foxue shuju, 2001).

[108] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 339.

and urged him to keep their arrival a low-key affair. However, when Yen Pei and Chaochen arrived at the Penang airport, they were received at the airport by prominent monks including Chuk Mor, Bendao 本道, Mingde 明德, Zhenguo 真果, Guangyi 廣義, Guangyu 廣餘, Songnian 松年, Xingren 性仁, Huiseng 慧僧, Longhui 龍輝, and Longgen, representatives from the Phor Tay School, and some fifty or sixty devotees.[109] Chuk Mor, the protagonist in the previous chapter, migrated to Penang in 1954 and quickly established himself as the de facto leader of the Chinese Buddhist community in Malaya. Yen Pei became acquainted with Chuk Mor during his sojourn in Hong Kong in the early 1950s. Hence, Chuk Mor invited Yen Pei to reside at his Chuk Yuen Vihāra for the duration of his visit in Penang.[110]

For the next couple of days, Yen Pei visited the Phor Tay School, Heong Sun See (*Xiangshan si* 香山寺), Kek Lok Si, and the Snake Temple (*Shemiao* 蛇廟). He also participated in the Vesak Day celebrations and was greatly impressed by the scale and size of the event. He observed that many Chinese Buddhist temples organized the bathing of the Buddha (*yufo* 浴佛) ceremony to commemorate the birth of the Buddha.[111] Later, Yen Pei and Chaochen were invited to give a lecture at the Phor Tay School. Yen Pei gave a talk titled "From Human-life Buddhism to Liberation Buddhism" (*Cong rensheng fojiao shuodao jietuo fojiao* 從人生佛教說到解脫佛教), and Chaochen's lecture was titled "What is the Correct Buddha-dharma" (*Shenme shi*

[109] Ibid., 340.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid., 341-346.

zhengque de fofa 什麼是正確的佛法).[112] After spending two weeks in Penang, Yen Pei and Chaochen continued their tour in Malaya. They visited temples in Ipoh, Cameron Highlands, Kuala Lumpur, Malacca, Muar, and Batu Pahat, where they met a number of overseas Chinese monks, including Venerables Shengjin 勝進, Zhenmin 振敏, Jing'an 鏡盦, Yanzhi 演智, Shengkai 盛凱, Guying 古應, Yinci 印慈, Guangyu, and Jinxing 金星, Jinming 金明, Dingguang 定光, and Juezhen 覺真.[113]

In June 1961, Yen Pei, accompanied by Chaochen and Longgen, crossed the Johor-Singapore Causeway and arrived in Singapore for the first time. At that time, Singapore was still a British colony, but had been given self-governance in 1959. Following end of the Second World War in 1945, there was an increase in the number of Buddhist temples, as well as in the number of clerics and laity in Singapore.[114] The 1947 Census for British Malaya and Singapore as seen in Table 1 of the previous chapter showed that the number of "Chinese National Religion" adherents, which made up approximately 2.5 million of the Malaya and Singapore population, was on par with the size of Muslim population.[115] Although the census aggregated Buddhism, Taoism, and Chinese folk religion into a monolithic religious category, one can deduce that Buddhists did make up a significant number in the Chinese majority population in colonial Singapore.

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[112] Ibid., 348-349.
[113] Ibid., 350-357.
[114] Y.D. Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore: A Short Narrative History* (Singapore: Skylark Publications, 2005), chapter 5.
[115] See Colin McDougall, *Buddhism in Malaya* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1956), 33.

Nevertheless, in her 1976 paper, sociologist Vivienne Wee suggests that although about 50 percent of the Singaporean population declare themselves as "Buddhists," and use a common religious label, they do not share a "unitary religion." She argues that Singapore's "Buddhism" had to be understood in a "dialectic framework": on the one hand, "Buddhism" in Singapore was canonical Buddhism, and on the other hand, "Buddhism" was Chinese religion. In other words, Buddhism as practiced by majority of the Chinese in Singapore, from the period of Chinese migration to Singapore in the early twentieth century right up to Vivienne Wee's research conducted in the 1970s, was pretty much an inclusive religion, embracing both canonical Buddhist doctrines and Chinese religious traditions and practices.[116]

Given the presence of a considerable Buddhist population in Singapore, the Buddhist community saw the need to set up a national association to unify and represent the interests of the various Buddhist organizations.[117] On July 31, 1949, Lee Choon Seng (Li Juncheng 李俊承, 1888-1966), a prominent lay Buddhist and leader of the Chinese community, invited representatives from all Buddhist temples to discuss the formation of Singapore Buddhist Federation at the Singapore Buddhist

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[116] Vivienne Wee's research was first published as a working paper entitled "A Preliminary Account of Buddhism in Singapore" in 1975, and later, as a book chapter in 1976. See Vivienne Wee, "Buddhism in Singapore," in *Understanding Singapore Society*, ed. Ong Jin Hui, Tong Chee Kiong and Tan Ern Ser (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1997), 130-162.

[117] Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore*, 86-87.

Lodge (*Xinjiapo fojiao jushi lin* 新加坡佛教居士林).[118] The Singapore Buddhist Federation was officially registered a few months later on October 30, 1949. The Management Committee was made up of five monastics and five lay members. Lee Choon Seng was appointed the chairman and Venerable Hong Choon, a prominent monk and abbot of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See (*Guangmingshan pujue si* 光明山普覺寺), was elected the vice-chairman of the organization. At the inaugural meeting of the Singapore Buddhist Federation held at Singapore Buddhist Lodge on February 12, 1950, Lee Choon Seng emphasized the five specific guiding objective of the Singapore Buddhist Federation: promote world peace; propagate the Dharma; expand Buddhist education; carry out welfare activities; and improve the quality of Sangha.[119]

During the 1950s, the Singapore Buddhist Federation played a proactive role in advancing the interests of the Buddhist community and in working with the British colonial authorities. The most significant achievement of Singapore Buddhist Federation-led activism was the movement to lobby for Vesak to be gazetted as a public holiday in Singapore.[120] Since the late 1940s, Buddhist community had tried to petition the colonial government for Vesak to be recognized as a public holiday. On October 14, 1947, Singapore Buddhist Association, a Ceylonese Theravāda group, submitted a petition to Singapore's governor Sir F.C. Gimson. The petition, however,

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[118] For a brief biography of Lee Choon Seng, See Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore*, 48-49.
[119] Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore*, 87.
[120] For a study of Singapore Buddhist Federation-led activism, see Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "Defending the Dharma: Buddhist Activism in a Global City-State," in *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society, 1965-2015*, ed. Jason Lim and Terence Lee (New York: Routledge, 2016), 143-158.

was rejected on the ground that there was not enough practicing Buddhists to justify the increase in the number of statutory holidays in Singapore. To pursue the matter, a Vesak Holiday Committee headed by Venerable Hong Choon as the chairman was formed on May 11, 1949 to rally for their cause. Representatives of fifty-one Buddhist temples and associations congregated at the Victoria Memorial Hall to appeal for a public holiday for Vesak. The British governor again rejected their request. Following the establishment of the Singapore Buddhist Federation, another petition was submitted to the Select Committee on Holidays Ordinance (Chapter 174) on February 27, 1950, but again was unsuccessful. After numerous failed attempts, the introduction of partial self-government in Singapore and the appointment of David Marshall as Singapore's first Chief Minister in 1955 brought hopes to the quest for a Vesak public holiday. On June 15, 1955, the government of David Marshall declared Vesak as a public holiday in place of Whit Monday.[121] Besides lobbying for Vesak to be made a public holiday, the Singapore Buddhist Federation also successfully requested the colonial government to set up Buddhist cemeteries.[122] By the time Yen Pei visited Singapore in 1961, Singapore already had a pretty vibrant Buddhist community.

Yen Pei wrote in his autobiography that he once thought of visiting his former teacher Cihang at his Leng Foong Bodhi Institute (*Lingfeng puti xueyuan* 靈峰菩提學

[121] Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore*, 88-92.
[122] Shi Nengdu 釋能度, Shi Xiantong 釋賢通, He Xiujuan 何秀娟, and Xu Yuantai 許原泰, ed., *Xinjiapo hanchuan fojiao fazhan gaishu* 新加坡漢傳佛教發展概述 (Singapore: Buddha of Medicine Welfare Society, 2010), 61.

院) in Singapore and staying at the institute's monastic dormitories at end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1945. However, he was then instructed by Taixu to teach at Wulin Buddhist Institute, and hence, missed the chance to go to Singapore. Therefore, Yen Pei especially looked forward to visiting the organizations that Cihang founded.[123] Yen Pei, Chaochen, and Longgen arrived at the Beeh Low See Buddhist Temple (*Bilu si* 毘盧寺) in the afternoon. There, they were warmly welcomed by some thirty Buddhist leaders including Venerables Bendao, Kong Hiap, Hong Choon, Guangjing 廣淨, Siong Khye, and Yinshi 印實. Yen Pei had already met several of the monks back in China when he was a student at Nanputuo Monastery in Xiamen, and was delighted to reconnect with them.[124] His initial thoughts on the state of Buddhism in Singapore and the reception accorded to him were published in the local Chinese newspaper:

> In the last decade, there were great developments in the Buddhism of Malaya and Singapore. The education, cultural, and charitable projects organized by various Buddhist organizations had shown good performance. This was the view expressed yesterday by renowned Buddhist scholar Venerable Yen Pei who is here for a visit…Venerables Yen Pei and Chaochen recently visited various places in Southeast Asia. Yesterday, [they] arrived at the Beeh Low See Buddhist Temple in Jurong (*Yulang* 裕廊) and were warmly welcomed

[123] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 339.
[124] Ibid., 358.

> by various Buddhist organizations and monasteries in Singapore. Those that went to receive them include representatives from Singapore Buddhist Federation, Chinese Buddhist Association (*Zhonghua fojiao hui* 中華佛教會), Buddhist Union (*Yingyu fojiao hui* 英語佛教會), World Buddhist Fellowship (*Shijie fojiao youyi hui* 世界佛教友誼會), Mee Toh School (*Mituo xuexiao* 彌陀學校), and Maha Bodhi School (*Puti xuexiao* 菩提學校).[125]

Yen Pei's autobiography reveals the transnational networks connecting monastics in China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. Both Yen Pei and his teacher, Yinshun, had strong ties with the monastic community in Singapore. Yen Pei pointed out that Bendao, the abbot of Beeh Low See Buddhist Temple, was a percept classmate (*tongjie* 同戒) and friend of his teacher Yinshun.[126] Yinshi, a Dharma brother of Yinshun, brought Yen Pei to visit Hai Inn Temple (*Haiyin si* 海印寺), where their teacher Qingnian 清念 resided for five years.[127] Yen Pei also revealed that he knew Kong Hiap and Guangjing back in China and had especially strong affinity (*tebie youyuan* 特別有緣) with them. He first met Kong Hiap at the Nanputuo Monastery in 1936 in Xiamen. At that time, Yen Pei was a student at the Minnan Buddhist Institute, while Kong Hiap was a school superintendent (*jianxue* 監學) at

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[125] *Nanyang Siang Pau* 南洋商報, quoted in Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 359.
[126] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 360.
[127] Ibid., 363.

the nearby Buddhist Yangzheng College (*Fojiao yangzheng yuan* 佛教養正院).[128] Yen Pei's familiarity and friendship with the monastics in Singapore coupled with the presence of a burgeoning Buddhist community were one of the factors that later prompted him to migrate to Singapore.

During Yen Pei's month-long trip in Singapore, he met prominent Buddhist leaders, visited various Buddhist monasteries, organizations, and schools, and gave a series of Dharma lectures. Yen Pei and Chaochen first visited Kong Hiap's Leong San See Temple (*Longshan si* 龍山寺) and the Mee Toh School, where they were welcomed by teachers and students. Yen Pei observed that the four-story school had approximately five to six hundred overseas Chinese students and used Chinese as the language of instruction. He expressed his admiration for Kong Hiap's effort in the promotion of education.[129] Yen Pei and Chaochen then visited Venerable Daming 達明 at Yuan Ming Monastery (*Yuanming si* 圓明寺), Zhuan'an 轉岸 and Guangzhou 廣週 at Poo Thor Jee (*Putuo si* 普陀寺), Hong Choon at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See, Beow Teng (Miaodeng 妙燈) at the Poh Jay Monastery (*Puji si* 普濟寺), Falu 法祿 at the Buddhist Union. They also called on Lee Choon Seng at the Singapore Buddhist Federation, Pitt Chin Hui (Bi Junhui 畢俊輝, 1906-1981) at the World Buddhist Fellowship, Tan Soo Kiok (Chen Ciqu 陳賜曲) at the Singapore Buddhist

[128] Ibid.,361-362.
[129] Ibid., 360-361.

Lodge, and the Chinese Buddhist Association.[130] Yen Pei was generally impressed with the growing Buddhist community in Singapore, but expressed his disappointment towards the "pathetic state" (*kelian dehen* 可憐的很) of the Chinese Buddhist Association. As pointed out in Chapter 1, the Chinese Buddhist Association was founded in 1927 with the encouragement and support of Taixu to promote Buddhist education and welfare activities. However, when Yen Pei visited the organization, he noticed that it no longer organize activities and was located in a residential house.[131]

During the few weeks of his stay, Yen Pei delivered a series of lectures at various Buddhist organizations in Singapore. The Singapore Buddhist Federation invited Yen Pei to give a weeklong lecture series at the Maha Bodhi School. Yen Pei lectured the *Verses on the Structure of the Eight Consciousnesses* (*Bashi guiju song* 八識規矩頌) to some two hundred attendees; to his surprise, some of the audience had previously attended the late Cihang's talks on the Eight Consciousnesses.[132] Thereafter, Bendao invited Yen Pei to give a three-day lecture series at Beeh Low See. Yen Pei spoke about the "Attending to the Dharma to Enter the Path" (*Wenfa quru* 聞法趣入) chapter of Yinshun's renowned treatise *The Way to Buddhahood*, a seminal text on Humanistic Buddhism. According to Yen Pei, he decided to preach about the "Attending to the Dharma to Enter the Path" chapter of his teacher's treatise because

[130] Ibid., 361-364.
[131] Ibid., 363.
[132] Ibid., 364-365.

he observed that many overseas Chinese Buddhists in Southeast Asia enjoyed chanting the scriptures, but they were less interested in listening to Dharma lectures. He noted that many Buddhists neither knew about the "orthodox Dharma" (*zhengfa* 正法) nor understood the significance of "taking refuge in the Triple Gems" (*guijing sanbao* 歸敬三寶). Yen Pei was dismayed that some Buddhists did not even know what the Triple Gems were after they had taken refuge. He therefore hoped that his lectures could inspire the Buddhist community to pay more attention on learning the Dharma (*duo wenfa* 多聞法).[133]

Besides the two major lecture series, Yen Pei gave talks at numerous places, including Mee Toh School, Katho Vihāra (*Qietuo jingshe* 伽陀精舍), Jinsen Youth Detention Center (*Jinsen ganhua yuan* 金森感化院), Bodhi Araṇya (*Puti lanruo* 菩提蘭若), Singapore Buddhist Lodge, Maha Bodhi School, and Meow Im Kok Yuen (*Miaoyin jueyuan* 妙音覺院).[134] Yen Pei and Chaochen were also invited to give their first ever Dharma talk on national radio. Yen Pei delivered a short thirteen minutes and twenty seconds lecture titled "Is Buddhism a Religion?" (*Fojiao shi bushi zongjiao* 佛教是不是宗教), while Chaochen gave an eleven-minute talk on the "Three Unique Characteristics of Buddhism" (*Fojiao de sanda tezhi* 佛教的三大特質).[135] However, Yen Pei recalled that one of the most memorable lectures he gave was held at the Victoria Theater, where it was attended by some 400 members of the

[133] Ibid., 369-370.
[134] Ibid., 364-371.
[135] Ibid., 368.

public. His public lecture "The Fundamental Characteristics of Buddhism" (*Fojiao de genben tezhi* 佛教的根本特質) was chaired by Meng Dai'er 蒙戴爾, a professor from the Nanyang Univesity (*Nanyang daxue* 南洋大學). Yen Pei delivered his lecture in Mandarin and Pitt Chin Hui translated it into English.[136]

Before departing Singapore, Yen Pei and Chaochen visited the Leng Foong Bodhi Institute and the newly established Singapore Girls' Buddhist Institute (*Xinjiapo nüzi foxue yuan* 新加坡女子佛學院). Yen Pei was delighted to see the former bedroom, study room, and lecture room of the late Cihang. However, he did not have time to visit the monastic dormitories that he longed to see.[137] Two days before Yen Pei and Chaochen left Singapore, Bendao organized a farewell banquet at Beeh Low See to celebrate their visit to Singapore. On July 22, 1961, after spending more than a month in Singapore, Yen Pei and Chaochen were given a send off by Venerables Kong Hiap, Hong Choon, Siong Khye, Guangjing, Guangyi, Falu, and several lay Buddhists. They left Singapore on a cruise ship and arrived in Hong Kong three days later.[138]

Yen Pei's first visit to Singapore was a short, but nonetheless, significant one. First, the trip clearly highlighted the strong Buddhist networks between the monastic community in China, Taiwan, and Singapore. There is little surprise that Yen Pei already knew or heard about most of the Buddhist leaders in Singapore because he

[136] Ibid., 370-371.
[137] Ibid., 372-374.
[138] Ibid., 374-376.

had either met them previously, or they were connected to his teacher Yinshun. Because of the strong networks, Yen Pei would soon be invited to visit Singapore again. Second, the trip gave Yen Pei an opportunity to interact with the growing Buddhist community in Singapore. Although Yen Pei was delighted with the vibrant presence of Buddhist temples and schools, he thought more could be done to promote Humanistic Buddhism and expand religious education in Singapore.

From Sojourner to Settler: Yen Pei's Second Visit

Despite Yen Pei's connections and familiarity with the Buddhist community in Singapore, he had always thought that his "Dharmic affinity was with Vietnam" (*fayuan quezai Yuenan* 法緣確在越南). Yen Pei pointed out that he was respected by the overseas Chinese community in Vietnam, well connected with the Vietnamese monastics, and had a small following of disciples.[139] His monastic disciples in Vietnam included Venerables Jinghua 淨華, Jingmi 淨密, Jingshou 淨受, and Jingsu 淨蘇.[140] In the fall of 1963, Yen Pei's disciple Jinghua requested him to visit and teach the Dharma in Vietnam.[141] Yen Pei's initial plan was to build a temple and settle in Vietnam.[142]

[139] Ibid., 377.
[140] See Ibid., 572-576.
[141] Ibid., 377.
[142] Ibid., 393-395.

On February 14, 1964, Yen Pei arrived in Vietnam and resided at his disciple's recently rebuilt Wondrous Dharma Vihāra in Saigon. This was his third trip to Vietnam. He officiated the opening ceremony and gave a ten-day evening lecture series on *The Discourse On The Ten Wholesome Ways Of Action* (*Shishan yedao ding* 十善業道經).[143] At that time, the Vietnam War was intensifying. The fight between the communist-supported North Vietnam and the U.S.-supported South resulted in political and economic instability.[144] Although most of the Buddhists were based in the relative safety of South Vietnam, they experienced discrimination under the Catholic dominated Ngô Đình Diệm government, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, many were living in uncertainty because of the ongoing war. In this context, Yen Pei decided to preach the ten wholesome actions coupled with his interpretation of the Humanistic Buddhism to inspire the Vietnamese Buddhist community.[145]

After completing the lecture series at Wondrous Dharma Vihāra, Yen Pei was invited to give another seven-day lecture series on the *Ten Great Vows of Samantabhadra* (*Puxian shi dayuan* 普賢十大願) at the Ten Thousand Buddhas Monastery (*Wanfo si* 萬佛寺). During one of the evenings, the city was shut down for

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[143] The Ten Wholesome Ways Of Action (*shi shanye* 十善業) are 1) not killing; 2) not stealing; 3) not committing adultery; 4) not lying; 5) not speaking harshly; 6) not speaking divisively; 7) not speaking idly; 8) not being greedy; 9) not being angry; and 10) not having wrong views.

[144] For a history of the Vietnam War, see Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2012).

[145] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 382-383.

military exercise, so the lecture that day had to be canceled. Despite the wartime restrictions, Yen Pei completed his lecture series at the Ten Thousand Buddhas Monastery and gave several more talks at various Buddhist temples and organizations.[146] With his growing following, a number of overseas Chinese Buddhists suggested to Yen Pei that he should establish his own temple and settle in Vietnam. They thought that unlike Taiwan where there were already quite a number of prominent monastics, Vietnam had very few monks who could teach the Dharma in Chinese language. Hence, Yen Pei accepted their request and his disciple Jinghua enlisted the help of local leader Zhu Chenzao 朱陳造 to purchase a plot of land for the temple site. Soon, Yen Pei, with the help of Zhu Chenzao, obtained a piece of land for 100,000 Vietnamese dong and named the temple Fuhui Lecture Monastery (*Fuhui jiangsi* 福慧講寺). After finalizing the temple construction plan, Yen Pei wanted to make a trip back to Taiwan. However, he received an invitation from Lin Dajian 林達監 and Yun Jingyun 雲淨雲 to serve as the main celebrant for Cihang's ten-year death anniversary ceremony at the Bodhi Araṇya in Singapore. Yen Pei accepted the request and departed Vietnam for Singapore.[147] Little did he know that he would eventually spend the remaining of his religious career in this Southeast Asian city-state.

On May 25, 1964, Yen Pei arrived in Singapore and stayed at the Fah Si Lam (*Fashi lin* 法施林). The following day, he led the three-day *Litany of Liang Wudi*

[146] Ibid., 386-392.
[147] Ibid., 394.

(*Lianghuang baochan* 梁皇寶懺) ceremony to commemorate the death anniversary of Cihang.[148] During his stay in Singapore, Yen Pei met with his monastic friends Kong Kiap, Daming, Hong Choon, Guangjing, Bendao, Longgen, and Xingren. He also called on Lee Choon Seng at the Singapore Buddhist Federation and visited the Singapore Girls' Buddhist Institute.[149] Thereafter, Yen Pei gave a seven-day lecture on the *Heart Sūtra* (*Xinjing* 心經) at the Singapore Buddhist Federation. He recalled that some of the audiences had trouble understanding his Mandarin Chinese accent. He candidly pointed out that they misheard "prajñā" (*bore* 般若) for "glass" (*boli* 玻璃).[150] Despite his accent, some 150 audiences—with monastics making up half of the number—showed up for his lectures.[151]

Soon after his arrival in Singapore, Yen Pei received an invitation to visit Penang. On June 27, 1964, he left Singapore for Penang to participate in the consecration ceremony of the reconstructed Kwan Im See (*Guanyin si* 觀音寺). Subsequently, Yen Pei was invited to give talks at the Malaysian Buddhist Association, Phor Tay School, and Beow Hiang Lim (*Miaoxiang lin* 妙香林).[152] During his visit in Penang, Venerable Qingxin 清心, the founder of Sam Poh Tong (*Sanbao dong* 三寶洞) in Ipoh, suddenly passed away. Venerable Zongjian 宗鑑, a disciple of Qingxin, requested Yen Pei to preside the cremation ritual of his late

[148] Ibid., 397.
[149] Ibid., 398-399.
[150] *Bore* 般若 is the transliteration of the Sanskrit word "prajñā", meaning wisdom.
[151] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 399-400.
[152] Ibid., 402-406.

teacher. After the funeral rites, Zongjian invited Yen Pei to reside in Malaysia and assume the abbacy of Sam Poh Tong. He told Yen Pei that informal religious regulations in Singapore and Malaysia stipulated a one-for-one replacement for migrant monks.[153] In other words, Yen Pei could replace the late Qingxin and obtain a residence permit to stay in both Singapore and Malaysia. However, Yen Pei was cautious in accepting the invitation and decided to discuss the matter with his friends in Singapore before making a decision.[154]

After the cremation ceremony of Qingxin, Yen Pei returned to Singapore and received several requests to stay in the country. For instance, Venerable Yinshi suggested changing the name of Qingnian Memorial Hall (*Qingnian jinian tang* 清念紀念堂) to Fuhui Lower Hall (*Fuhui xiayuan* 福慧下院) with Yen Pei as the founding abbot.[155] Concurrently, Lin Dajian and Yun Jingyun requested Yen Pei to assume the position of abbot and a trustee member of Leng Foong Bodhi Institute. They considered Yen Pei was a worthy successor of the Buddhist institute that was founded by his teacher Cihang. Knowing his temple building plans in Vietnam, Lin Dajian convinced Yen Pei that Singapore is in close proximity to Saigon and that Yen Pei could manage both temples at the same time.[156] On the other hand, Yen Pei's close friend, Kong Hiap, expressed concern over the war and political instability in

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[153] Singapore joined Malaysia on September 16, 1963 and became one of the Malaysian states from September 16, 1963 to August 9, 1965. Therefore, if Yen Pei was given a residence permit, he could reside in both Singapore and Malaysia.
[154] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 406-408.
[155] Ibid., 409.
[156] Ibid., 410.

Vietnam, and tried to persuade him to settle in Singapore and Malaysia. Yen Pei recalled his conversation with Kong Hiap in a eulogy written for his late friend three decades later:

> Yen Pei: My current trip to Singapore is said to be a visit. But frankly, I aim to seek the help of virtuous friends to raise funds to build a humble temple in Vietnam. This is because local leader Zhu [Chenzao] of Biên Hòa in Vietnam had given me a sizeable plot of land to construct a Chinese monastery… However, during my Dharma propagation trip to Singapore and Malaysia, the situation in Vietnam has been worsening day by day. The Viet Cong had bombarded the location in Biên Hòa where I want to build a monastery.
>
> Kong Hiap: Given the impending war in South Vietnam, Saigon is likely unable to be defended for long. Instead of building a monastery in Vietnam, why not find a place to settle in Singapore and Malaysia. I cannot be at ease [if you] stay in Vietnam.[157]

In the end, Yen Pei acceded to his friends' invitation and assumed the leadership position of Leng Foong Bodhi Institute. Lin Dajian immediately called up

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[157] Yen Pei, "Jingdao wo zui zunjing de Qiagong zhanglao 敬悼我最尊敬的洽公長老," *Nanyang fojiao* 南洋佛教 300 (1994): 12-13.

Zongjian to help apply for Yen Pei's residence permit.[158] After accepting the offer to become the abbot and a trustee member of Leng Foong Bodhi Institute, Yen Pei suggested including Longgen as an additional trustee member, which Lin Dajian reluctantly agreed. On September 5, 1964, Yen Pei and Lin Dajian went to a law firm to sign the trustee's deed.[159] However, following the signing of the deed, Yen Pei encountered some difficulty obtaining his residence permit. He recalled that some senior monks were probably jealous and felt threatened by his decision to migrate to Singapore. They tried to obstruct Yen Pei's residence permit application by delaying the approval of Malaysian Buddhist Association's documents.[160] Some even tried to spread rumors that Yen Pei "coveted to become the chairman of Malaysian Buddhist Association, and snatched away Leng Foong Bodhi Institute."[161] Zongjian advised Yen Pei to be cautious and not engage in Dharma preaching activities before receiving his permit.[162] Finally, after two months of agonizing wait, Yen Pei's residence permit was approved by the Immigration Department. On November 18, 1964, Yen Pei accompanied by Member of Parliament, Geh Chong Keat (Li Zongji 倪宗吉), collected his document from the immigration office in Penang.[163] This marked the beginning of his three-decade religious career in Singapore.

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[158] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 410.
[159] Ibid., 414.
[160] See Ibid., 415-425.
[161] Ibid., 420.
[162] Ibid., 422-423.
[163] Ibid., 425.

In sum, following his first visit to Singapore in 1961, Yen Pei thought well of Singapore, but did not have any intention of migrating there. He had always considered his Dharmic affinity to be with Vietnam. In fact, prior to his second visit to Singapore in 1964, Yen Pei received a plot of land in Saigon to construct his Fuhui Lecture Monastery. Therefore, when he came to Singapore for the second time, he initially wanted to make use of the opportunity to raise funds for this temple building project in Vietnam. However, combinations of factors made him eventually decide to settle in Singapore. The worsening of the war situation in Vietnam, coupled with his strong networks of friends and the offer of a leadership position at his former teacher's temple, were compelling reasons for his migration to Singapore. Yen Pei would begin his religious career revamping Leng Foong Bodhi Institute in a newly independent Singapore.

Revamping Leng Foong, 1964-1979

A few months after Yen Pei's migration to Singapore, Singapore separated from Malaysia on August 9, 1965 and became an independent republic. In the 1960s, ethnic Chinese constituted approximately 75% of Singapore's population.[164] Although religion was included as an item in questionnaire used in the colonial censuses, it was omitted in the post-war censuses held in 1957 and 1970, and

[164] See Saw Swee-Hock, *The Population of Singapore (Third Edition)* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 29.

reintroduced in the 1980 census.[165] According to the 1947 Census Report, there was a close overlap between race and religion.[166] Since Chinese were the ethnic majority, and most of the Chinese were adherents of "Chinese national religion" that included Buddhism, Taoism, and Chinese folk religion as reported in the census, one could therefore infer that Buddhism was a prevalent religion in post-independence Singapore.

In his study of Buddhism in Singapore, Y.D. Ong points out that Mahāyāna Buddhism as practiced by the Chinese majority in Singapore was "mainly ritualistic." This was because the religious activities in Chinese Buddhist monasteries and temples were limited to lighting joss sticks and the chanting of scriptures. Therefore, most Buddhists visited temples to seek blessings and recite the sūtra, but had little knowledge and understanding of the Buddhist doctrines. Furthermore, Buddhist temples and organizations organized few Dharma lectures and propagation events. Although many Chinese Buddhist monasteries had resident monks, many of them were ritual specialists rather than Dharma teachers. In addition, Y.D. Ong notes that the lack of suitable religious spaces could also be attributed for the dearth of Dharma propagation activities. During that time, most Buddhist temples were constructed as a ritual space without an auditorium or classroom for talks and classes.[167]

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[165] Ibid., 41.
[166] Ibid., 43-44.
[167] Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore*, 98.

When Yen Pei took over as the abbot and trustee of Leng Foong Bodhi Institute, he saw the need to revamp the temple that Cihang established in 1944. Just like Chuk Mor in the previous chapter, Yen Pei wanted to build a modern styled auditorium (*jiangtang* 講堂) to preach the Dharma in the spirit of Humanistic Buddhism. Yen Pei sent Venerable Huiyuan 慧圓 to search for a suitable plot of land to build a new Leng Foong.[168] However, the locations that they found were either too small or inaccessible to the public. Eventually, after two years of search, they found a suitable venue in Katong. Unfortunately, Yen Pei later found out that the land was located in a residential area and hence not allowed to be used for the construction of religious facilities.[169] Disappointed, he decided to demolish Leng Foong Bodhi Institute and build an auditorium in the same location.[170] On August 7, 1966, Yen Pei engaged architect Chen Jiebing 陳潔冰 to design a modern auditorium. Thereafter, he sought the help of lawyer Wang Xiande 王先德 and Huang Funan 黃富南 to survey and submit an application for the construction plan to the local authorities, and hired building contractor Hong Guohong 洪國鴻 for the demolition and reconstruction of Leng Foong.[171]

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[168] Lin Dajian was ordained as a monastic with the Dharma name Huiyuan.
[169] Xu Yuantai points out that the Singapore government's policies and urban redevelopment projects have affected Buddhist and Taoist institutions. Only lands that are zoned for Places of Worship can be used for religious activities. These sites are often located within or at the fringe of industrial areas. See Xu Yuantai, *Yan'ge yu moshi*, chapter 6.
[170] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 493.
[171] Ibid., 494.

The first day of the seventh lunar month in 1966 marked the beginning of the demolition of the old Leng Foong Bodhi Institute. After the old structure was torn down, a reconstruction groundbreaking ceremony was held a year later on the seventh day of the sixth lunar month in 1967. Yen Pei invited Siong Khye, several nuns, and lay Buddhists to witness the ritual. Yen Pei decided to slightly change the name to Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium (*Lingfeng bore jiangtang* 靈峰般若講堂) and recited the following verses at the closing of the groundbreaking ceremony:

> Green bamboos and yellow flowers, all things are wisdom (*prajñā*);
> Mountains, rivers, and earth, everywhere is nothing but an auditorium
> 翠竹黃花，物物皆是般若；
> 山河大地，處處無非講堂[172]

After the ceremony, Yen Pei asked Siong Khye to serve as the chairman of the Construction Preparatory Committee (*jianzhu chouwei hui* 建築籌委會). The eleven-man preparatory committee included Yen Pei and Longgen as the co-vice chairman, Venerable Huimin 慧敏 as treasurer, Qu Cifa 區慈法 as director of general affairs, and Venerable Huiyuan, Venerable Huiping 慧平, Venerable Nengdu 能度, Venerable Fakun 法坤, Yun Jingyun, and Mai Shengji 麥聖集 as committee

[172] Ibid.

members.[173] Yen Pei appointed Longgen as the supervisor of the construction project. During the building of Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium, a temporary temple was erected at the vacant space of Fah Si Lam. With the construction project undergoing, Yen Pei made a trip to Vietnam to settle some unfinished business.[174]

On August 15, 1967, Yen Pei arrived in Vietnam to meet with the Vietnamese Buddhism community to discuss the construct of a memorial stupa for his late friend Xuming who passed away a year ago. They discussed the architectural drawing of the stupa and surveyed the site at Dharma-Flower Monastery (*Fahua jingyuan* 法華淨院) at Đà Lạt. During his stay, Yen Pei also ordained Jingshou as his disciple. On October 28, Yen Pei left Vietnam for Taiwan to serve as an instructional preceptor (*jiaoshou heshang* 教授和尚) for a precepts transmission ceremony (*chuanjie* 傳戒) at Ciming Monastery (*Ciming si* 慈明寺) in Taichung (*Taizhong* 台中).[175]

On June 9, 1968, Yen Pei returned to Singapore after spending several months abroad. By that time, the construction of Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium was almost completed. The new Leng Foong was three stories high. The lecture hall, which housed an image of Śākyamuni Buddha, has a seating capacity of more than a hundred. The sūtra library (*cangjing ge* 藏經閣) is located on the third floor. [176]

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[173] *Lingfeng bore jiangtang tekan: jinian chuangli sishi zhounian* 靈峰般若講堂: 紀念創立四十週年 (Singapore: Leng Foong Prajna Auditorium, 2009), 89-90.
[174] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 494-495.
[175] Ibid., 496-497.
[176] *Lingfeng bore jiangtang tekan*, 104.

Similar to Chuk Mor's Triple Wisdom Hall, Yen Pei's Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium was devoid of dragons and phoenixes of a typical Chinese temple. Yen Pei, too, wanted to use the auditorium as a space for his Dharma lectures and group practice (*gongxiu* 共修).

Figure 3.3: Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium in Present-day Singapore.

Photo by author.

Yen Pei invited his teacher, Yinshun, to be the main celebrant of the opening consecration ceremony.[177] On December 29, 1968, Yinshun arrived in Singapore along with Venerables Ti'an 堤岸, Chaochen, and Shihuan 是幻. Yen Pei also invited senior monastics from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia to witness the event. A day before the opening, Yen Pei's friend Mei Shouchuan, who was the chairman of Vietnam Buddhist Federation and Secretary of Culture for South Vietnam, came to Singapore to attend the opening ceremony. Mei Shouchuan was delighted to see Yen Pei and to meet Yinshun, whom he had long admired, for the first time.[178]

The opening ceremony of Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium was held on January 12, 1969. On the day of the event, the leaders of the Singapore Buddhist community headed the opening ritual: Siong Khye led the flag raising; Hong Choon cut the ribbons; and Hong Kiap delivered the opening remarks. Following that, they entered the new auditorium. Bendao unveiled the image of the Śākyamuni Buddha, and the main celebrant, Yinshun, delivered the Dharma-words (*fayu* 法語) to consecrate the Buddha image. Mei Shouchuan then offered flowers to the Buddha, and Yen Pei ended the ceremony by delivering his closing remarks.[179] In his speech, Yen Pei gave a background and overview of the reconstruction project, and thanked both monastic and lay Buddhists in Singapore and overseas for giving him their support.[180] The

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[177] Yinshun, *Pingfan de yisheng*, 133.
[178] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 497-498.
[179] Ibid., 499-500.
[180] *Lingfeng bore jiangtang tekan*, 97.

elaborate opening ceremony was no doubt a symbolic one. It demonstrates Yen Pei's broad networks and reputation in the regional Buddhist community. Prominent monks from Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Malaysia specially traveled to Singapore to display their friendship and support for Yen Pei. Furthermore, by inviting his teacher Yinshun to serve as the main celebrant, Yen Pei wanted to highlight Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium's connection and lineage to Yinshun's ideas of Humanistic Buddhism, as well as his commitment to promote education and research in Singapore.

Figure 3.4: The Opening Ceremony of the Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium, January 12, 1969. The Monks in the Photo were (left to right): Longgen, Bendao, Kong Hiap, Hong Choon, Yinshun, Yen Pei, and Siong Khye. Source: Yinshun, *Pingfan de yisheng*, 134.

The objective of Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium revealed its missionary intent to convert people to Buddhism. The organization aimed to "preach and propound the Dharma" (*yi fofa jiaohua* 以佛法教化), and targeted a "mass audience, not limited to Buddhists" (*yi minzhong wei duixiang, buxian fotu* 以民眾為對象，不限佛徒). During Yen Pei's tenure as the abbot, he organized a weekly Saturday evening Prajñā group practice assembly (*bore gongxiu hui* 般若共修會) and lecture on the Buddhist doctrines. He also held a *Diamond Sūtra* group practice Dharma assembly (*Jingang gongxiu fahui* 金剛共修法會) on the first day of each lunar month to propagate the teachings of the *Diamond Sūtra*.[181] Subsequently, in 1973, Yen Pei established the first Chinese Buddhist Sunday school (*zhouri xuexi ban* 週日學習班) for children and teenagers in Singapore.[182] The response for the Sunday school was positive with 103 children and teenagers aged between 8 and 15 years signing up for the class. The Sunday school started a month later on April 22. Yen Pei's disciple, Venerable Kuanyan 寬嚴, was appointed the chief teacher of the Sunday school. The Sunday school aimed to teach children and teenagers knowledge of the Buddhist teachings through Dharma lessons and storytelling. The weekly class, which lasted an hour and a half, also included hymn singing, games, and sports.[183]

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[181] Ibid.,104.

[182] Venerable Mahaweera, a Theravāda monk, started the first English-language Buddhist Sunday school at the Outram Road Temple in 1940. Subsequently, Mangala Vihāra established their Sunday school in 1960. See Ong, *Buddhism in Singapore*, 118.

[183] "Lingfeng bore jiangtang chuangshe fojiao zhouri xuexi ban 靈峰般若講堂創設佛教週日學習班," *Nanyang fojiao* 南洋佛教 48 (1973): 26; *Lingfeng bore jiangtang tekan*, 130, 170.

Besides the regular activities, Yen Pei organized annual events such as the grand offerings (*pugong* 普供) and opening sutra (*kaijing* 開經) on the tenth day of the first lunar month, the transmission of the lamp and bathing the Buddha (*chuandeng yufo* 傳燈浴佛) ceremony to celebrate the Buddha's birthday on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, the Kṣitigarbha transcendence (*Dizang chaodu* 地藏超度) and eight precepts (*baguan zhaijie* 八關齋戒) Dharma assemblies on the lunar seventh month, and a tea ceremony (*pucha* 普茶) on the Mid-Autumn Festival. Yen Pei also encouraged his followers to "research the Buddha-dharma, serve the Buddhist temples and public welfare, actualize the bodhisattva spirit of sacrificing oneself to benefit others, in order to be courageous and diligent" (*yanjiu fofa, fuwu fojiao daochang ji gongyi, shijian pusa sheji lita jingshen, poneng yongmeng jingjin* 研究佛法，服務佛教道場及公益，實踐菩薩捨己利他精神，頗能勇猛精進). He believed that Buddhists should not only study and understand the Buddhist doctrines, but also be socially engaged and contribute to society. Therefore, Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium held an annual blood donation and fund raising campaign on Vesak Day to help the sick and needy.[184]

Yen Pei sought to make Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium a hub for Dharma education and propagation activities in Singapore. He relied on his personal connections to make his organization, and Singapore in general, a nodal point in the global Buddhist networks. Yen Pei invited numerous colleagues based in Asia

[184] *Lingfeng bore jiangtang tekan*, 104.

including Taiwan, Philippines, China, Hong Kong, and Malaysia to deliver guest lectures at Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium. Furthermore, given the strategic location of Singapore in the Asia Pacific, Yen Pei invited traveling monks from Australia, Canada, and the United States who passed through Singapore to speak at his auditorium.[185] The commemorative volume of Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium lists the names of monastics who visited during the period of Yen Pei's abbacy (see Table 2).

Country/Region	**Names of Monastics**
Australia	Fazong 法宗, Zanghui 藏慧
Canada	Xingkong 性空, Chengxiang 誠祥
China	Zhenchan 真禪, Mingyang 明暘, Mingshan 茗山, Miaoling 妙靈, Xingxiu 性修, Dewu 德悟, Wuxiang 無相, Songchun 松純, Zhenci 真慈, Jihui 吉慧
Hong Kong	Jueguang 覺光, Yongxing 永惺, Songquan 松泉, Chaochen 超塵, Rongling 融靈, Shihuan 是幻, Quanhui 泉慧, Liaozhi 了知, Shaogen 紹根, Dadao 達道, Huiren 慧忍, Zhihui 智慧, Zhifan 智梵, Zhikai 智開, Yuanguo 元果, Shenghuai 聖懷, Changhuai 暢懷
Malaysia	Zongjian 宗鑑

[185] Ibid., 104-105.

Philippines	Ruijin 瑞今, Guangfan 廣範, Chuanyin 傳印, Weici 唯慈, Zili 自立, Miaoqin 妙欽
Taiwan	Yinshun 印順, Xuming 續明, Fahang 法航, Daoan 道安, Baisheng 白聖, Xiandun 賢頓, Xingyun 星雲, Jingxin 淨心, Chengyi 成一, Jingliang 淨良, Shengyan 聖嚴, Zhenhua 真華, Changjue 常覺, Liaozhong 了中, Xintian 心田, Mingsheng 明聖, Huili 慧理
United States	Renjun 仁俊, Yinhai 印海, Haolin 浩霖, Miaofeng 妙峰, Huansheng 幻生, Chaoding 超定, Jinghai 淨海, Hongyi 宏意

Table 2: List of Monastics who visited the Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium

Source: *Lingfeng bore jiangtang tekan*, 104-105.

Yen Pei was known among the Buddhist community for being a prolific writer. He is remembered as a scholar-monk for his voluminous collection *Collected Works of Mindful Observation* (see Appendix 3). The publication of Yen Pei's collected work was inspired by none other than his teacher, Yinshun. In 1977, Yinshun stopped by Singapore after serving as a percepts instructor (*shuojie heshang* 說戒和尚) at a precepts transmission ceremony in Malaysia.[186] During Yinshun's stay at the Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium, he advised Yen Pei to compile all his writings into a collection for the convenience of his students and readers. Yen Pei was encouraged by

[186] Yinshun, *Pingfan de yisheng*, 138-139.

his teacher's suggestion and sorted through his voluminous writings, which came up to approximately seven million Chinese characters. Subsequently, Yen Pei organized his writings into five categories, namely, Sūtra Commentary (*jingshi* 經釋), Vinaya Commentary (*lüshi* 律釋), Abhidharma Commentary (*lunshi* 論釋), Render Freely (*yishu* 譯述), and Miscellaneous Sayings (*zashuo* 雜說).[187]

Yen Pei's *Collected Works of Mindful Observation* was first published in 28 volumes by Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium in Singapore and Yinshun's Hui Jih Auditorium (*Huiri jiangtang* 慧日講堂) in Taipei in conjunction with the celebration of Yen Pei's sixtieth birthday. The collection was widely circulated in a set, but also in individual copies in Singapore and in many parts of the Chinese-speaking world.[188] Later, Heavenly Lotus Publishing (*Tianhua chubanshe* 天華出版社), a Buddhist publishing company, took over the publication of the collected works in 1980, and reorganized the 28 volumes to 34.[189] Thereafter, his writings after the age of sixty were collected and published in the 12-volume *A Sequel to the [Collected Works of] Mindful Observation* (see Appendix 4). Taken together, the publication of his voluminous collected works gave him a dominant reputation as one of the foremost scholar-monks of Chinese Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

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[187] Yen Pei 演培, "Zixu 自序," in *Diguang quanji* 諦觀全集 (Taipei: Tianhua chubanshe, 1988), 15-19.
[188] Lee Bock Guan, interview by author, Singapore, July 18, 2014.
[189] The 34-volume Heavenly Lotus Publishing edition is the most widely circulated version of the collected works. Liao, "Yanpei fashi de zhuzuo nianpu," vi.

With his reputation as a prolific writer and preacher, Yen Pei was often invited to lecture and participate in percepts transmission ceremony in other countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam, United States, Philippines, and Taiwan. When Yen Pei was abroad, Longgen and Kuanyan helped him manage the affairs of the auditorium.[190] However, because Yen Pei did not have a Singapore passport, he often had to go through the tedious process of applying for an entry and exit permit when he went abroad for his Dharma propagation activities. Consequently, he had to decline numerous invitations and disappoint his overseas followers. Therefore, on November 20, 1979, Yen Pei handed over the abbacy of Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium to Longgen, and considered leaving Singapore for good. Hearing Yen Pei's intention to leave the country, Hong Choon and Siong Khye persuaded him to stay and volunteered to be guarantors for his Singapore citizenship application.[191] With the support of his Singaporean colleagues, Yen Pei received his Singapore citizenship in 1981, and remained there until his death in 1996.[192]

After his two visits to Singapore in 1961 and 1964, Yen Pei decided to settle in Singapore and assume the abbacy and trusteeship of Leng Foong Bodhi Institute because of the war and political unrest in Vietnam. During the first phase of his religious career in Singapore as the abbot of Leng Foong from 1964 to 1979, Yen Pei mainly focused on the promotion of Buddhist education and scholarship. Given the

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[190] *Lingfeng bore jiangtang tekan*, 105.
[191] At that time, Hong Choon was chairman and Siong Khye was secretary-general of the Singapore Buddhist Federation. Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 501.
[192] Ibid., 507.

context of the lack of Buddhist educational organizations and Dharma propagation activities in Singapore, Yen Pei recognized an urgent need to build a new religious space in the form of an auditorium, and to encourage the Humanistic Buddhist approach to religious education and knowledge. Therefore, he was quick to establish activities, such as a weekly lecture and group practice as well as a Sunday school to evangelize the Singapore population. Yen Pei also drew on his networks to invite visiting monks to speak at his Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium, making his organization a nodal point in the global Buddhist networks. During that time, although Yen Pei was socially engaged and made contributions to social welfare by organizing an annual blood donation and fund raising campaign to help the needy, his focus was on education and Dharma propagation. Following his decision to hand over the abbacy of Leng Foong and to become a Singapore citizen, Yen Pei turned his attention to social welfare. He would soon establish a Buddhist charity organization in his adopted country.

From Scholar-Monk to Social Activist, 1980-1996

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Singapore government under the People's Action Party (PAP) played a dominant role in transforming the physical, economic, and social landscape of Singapore. The developmental state introduced its modernization program, including industrialization, infrastructural growth, public housing, education and industrial training, and population control, which had an

immense impact on the population.[193] Between 1965 and 1985, Singapore experienced rapid economic growth and was transformed from a trading port to a major manufacturing hub in the region.[194] The rapid economic development precipitated a rise in the cost of living and the stratification of Singapore society. As Shirley Yee and Chua Beng Huat point out, sustained economic growth gave rise to a growing class-consciousness in the early 1990s. Perceptions of large inequalities of wealth emerged, as symbolic goods such as cars and private property became out of reach of the working class. Furthermore, incomes diverged between employees in the highly skilled, knowledge-based professions and those involved in less skilled, blue-collar work. Consequently, with rising costs of living in the 1980s, the lower-income group experienced much economic deterioration.[195] After the 1991 elections, then Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong admitted that "between 1972 and 1988, while the bottom 20% of the workforce had their incomes improved by 3.7%, the top 20% had theirs improved by 4.2%." [196] The economic effects had wide-ranging social repercussions. Yen Pei's social activism is better understood against the wider context of Singapore society at the time.

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[193] Shirley M.S. Yee and Chua Beng Huat, "Sociological Research: Following the Contours of Social Issues," in *Singapore Studies II: Critical Surveys of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, ed. Chua Beng Huat (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1999), 230.
[194] Carl A. Trocki, *Singapore: Wealth, Power and the Culture of Control* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 107.
[195] Yee and Chua, "Sociological Research," 239.
[196] *Straits Times*, July 30, 1991, quoted in Yee and Chua, "Sociological Research," 239.

As an advocate of Humanistic Buddhism, Yen Pei saw the need for Buddhists to be socially engaged, particularly to address the economic deterioration of the lower income group in Singapore society. He considered the promotion of social welfare as a way to "repay the gratitude of the country, society, senior monastics, and lay supporters" (*baoda guojia, shehui, zhanglao, hufa de ende* 報答國家, 社會, 長老, 護法的恩德). In 1980, Yen Pei decided to establish the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services (SBWS). With the help of his disciple Kuanyan, Yen Pei gave a Dharma talk to raise funds for a Buddhist charity organization. His call was met with enthusiastic response; he raised a sum of $8,325 for his cause.[197] On May 27, 1981, the SBWS was officially registered as a charitable religious organization with the Registry of Societies. Its management committee with Teo Chong Tee (Zhang Zhongzhi 張宗治), Chan Chee Seng (Chen Zhicheng 陳志成), and Han Jiok Jee (Han Yuyu 韓玉瑜) as consultants, Hong Choon, Kong Hiap, and Siong Khye as advisors, Yen Pei as the chairman, and Kuanyan as the secretary-general was formed a few months later in November.[198]

After registering his organization, Yen Pei purchased a piece of land to build the SBWS and its attached Dharma lecture hall, Fuhui Auditorium (*Fuhui jiangtang* 福慧講堂), in the northeast region of Singapore.[199] On December 30, 1981, a

[197] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 508.
[198] Ibid., 510-511.
[199] Fuhui Auditorium is the Dharma lecture hall for the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services. It was named after Yinshun's "Fu"yan Vihara and "Hui" Jih Auditorium in Taiwan.

groundbreaking ceremony was held to begin construction of a Buddhist welfare center. The construction project took about four years to complete. The completed building complex include an auditorium that can accommodate more than a thousand people, an elderly home for 120 residents, a childcare center, and an administrative building for library, conference room, and offices for staff.[200] The opening ceremony for the SBWS was held on March 16, 1986. Yen Pei invited Deputy Prime Minister Ong Teng Cheong to officiate the opening ceremony of the welfare organization. In his speech at the opening event, Ong Teng Cheong commended Yen Pei for translating the ideals of Buddhist teachings to address the practical needs of the people, and praised the management committee, members, volunteers, followers, and supporters for their contributions to the betterment of Singapore society. Additionally, the senior politician acknowledged the efforts of Singapore's religious groups in "supplementing the efforts of the government in meeting the needs of the aged and the aged sick."[201]

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[200] Yen Pei, *Yige fanyu seng de zibai*, 537-538.

[201] Ong Teng Cheong, "Speech by Mr Ong Teng Cheong, Second Deputy Prime Minister," Grand Opening Ceremony of the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Service, Singapore, March 16, 1986.

Figure 3.5: The Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services in Present-day Singapore

Photo by author

The work of the SBWS can be categorized into three major areas: elder care and filial responsibility; organ donation and kidney dialysis; and drug prevention and rehabilitation. It played a significant role in supplementing the effort, or the lack of it, of the PAP government in the provision of social services to the aged and needy. During the late 1970s and 1980s, in response to the perceived "crisis of the welfare state," the government decided to scale back state subsidies and redistribution programs, following similar trends in Britain, Western Europe and the United States. Instead, the government emphasized individual and family self-reliance to attain their

own economic and social well-being.[202] Consequently, the government provided social assistance on a selective, rather than entitlement, basis. Later, it promoted the "many helping hands" policy in the early 1990s whereby welfare provision was defined as the joint responsibility of the family, community, non-government groups, and the state.[203] The government offered limited support to the unemployed, the poor aged, the ill, and the disabled, while it would not seek to redistribute income from the affluent to the poor. The government thus viewed poverty as a short-term problem which had individual, rather than structural, causes.[204]

Concomitantly from 1975, there was a decline in the fertility rate and rise in the proportion of the aged in Singapore. The number of the school-going population declined from a peak of 569,400 in 1970 to 418,800 in 1990 as the birth rate declined over the two decades.[205] At the same time, the "old dependency burden," defined as the proportion of those aged 60 and over, increased twofold from 3.8 per cent in 1957 to 7.2 per cent in 1980 and 8.4 per cent in 1990.[206] In 1982, the government formed the Committee on the Problems of the Aged to study the impact of the greying

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[202] Chua Beng Huat, "Singapore: Growing Wealth, Poverty Avoidance and Management," in *Developmental Pathways to Poverty Reduction*, ed. Yusuf Bangura (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 205-206.
[203] Ang Bee Lian, "The Soul of Nation Building in Singapore: Contributions from Social Work," in *50 Years of Social Issues in Singapore*, ed. David Chan (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2015), 142.
[204] Philip Mendes, "An Australian Perspective on Singaporean Welfare Policy," *Social Work and Society* 5, 1 (2007): 35.
[205] Saw, *The Population of Singapore*, 36.
[206] Ibid., 37-38. For distribution of Singapore's population by age group from 1901 to 2010, see Saw, *The Population of Singapore*, 37.

population.[207] In line with the government's approach to social welfare, the Committee's report placed the onus of the issue on the family, community and society. It emphasized the pivotal role of the family in providing care for elderly, and the need to promote filial piety among young Singaporeans.[208]

In this context, Yen Pei was concerned with the welfare of poor and elderly Singaporeans and to address a need that the government did not provide for. He gave a series of sermons on the Buddhist perspective of elder care and filial responsibility that were subsequently published in the SBWS' monthly newsletter, *Grace Monthly* (*Ci'en* 慈恩).[209] In one of his sermons, he preached that "Buddhism is a religion that places utmost importance on filial piety" (*Fojiao shi zuizhongshi xiaodao de zongjiao* 佛教是最重視孝道的宗教):

> Speaking about placing importance on filial piety, as I mentioned earlier, there is no religion that is comparable to Buddhism. I hope that as Buddhists, [you] can practice filial piety in accordance to the Buddha-Dharma in [your] family. [You] can become a virtuous person in accordance to Buddha-Dharma for the society, and be a role model everywhere you go. This will influence everyone in the society to come

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[207] Olivia Goh, "Successful Ageing: A Review of Singapore's Policy Approaches," *Ethos* 1 (October 2006): 16-17.
[208] See *Report on the Committee on the Problems of the Aged* (Singapore: Ministry of Health, 1984).
[209] See, for instance, *Grace Monthly*, July 1983; *Grace Monthly*, May 1984; *Grace Monthly*, June 1984; *Grace Monthly*, May 1985; *Grace Monthly*, December 1985.

> and study Buddhism… As a householder, [you] often interact with people in the society. To encourage more people to believe in Buddhism, it depends on your behaviour, especially in being filial to your parents. People in the society are not able to say that Buddhism does not place emphasis on filial piety.[210]

In addition to promoting filial piety among the Buddhist community, Yen Pei highlighted that many needy elderly were living below the poverty line.[211] Concretely, he led the SBWS' active efforts in public assistance. Volunteers conducted regular house visits to needy elderly in their flats and brought them food and other daily necessities. In the month of March 1985 alone, SBWS distributed a total of 424 kilogrammes of rice, 469 packages of noodles, and public assistance totalling $1,038.[212] In January 1985, Yen Pei founded the Grace Lodge Home for the Aged (*Ci'en lin* 慈恩林) to provide shelter for homeless female elderly, regardless of their race and religion. The Home offered free residence, food, medical care, and physiotherapy for the residents. For instance, the April 1985 issue of the *Grace Monthly* newsletter reported the story of a homeless 85-year-old childless widow that had to live in a chicken coop. Eventually, she found a new home in the Grace Lodge where she was given free medical treatment and a place to stay.[213]

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[210] *Grace Monthly*, May 1985.
[211] Singapore has never had an official poverty line. *Grace Monthly*, April 1985.
[212] *Grace Monthly*, April 1985.
[213] Ibid.

Besides the aged, Yen Pei was also an active supporter of organ donation. In 1972, the Singapore parliament passed the Medical Therapy, Education and Research Act which allowed voluntary consent to become an organ pledger. The passing of this act gave an opportunity to any Singaporean to pledge any organ, which he or she wished to donate. Although the number of Singaporeans who pledged their organs continued to increase, the numbers were not very significant.[214] Yen Pei believed that organ donation is in line with Buddhist teachings of compassion and loving-kindness. Therefore, he tried to generate greater awareness on organ donation and encouraged Buddhists to donate their organs to help the sick. Yen Pei argued that Buddhists should support the practice of organ donation:

> Buddhist teachings stress much importance to the real practice of loving-kindness. Kidney and internal organ donations are expressions of the highest humanitarian ideals. The "gift of love" lights up the life of misfortunates who struggle at the fringe of disease and pain. Buddhism encourages all Buddhists to donate kidney or other useful internal organs to the sick. Buddhist should participate actively in the launching of kidney donation.[215]

To engage the Buddhist community, Yen Pei organized the "Kidney Donation: Buddhist View and Medical View" seminar at the Shangri-la Hotel on September 4,

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[214] K. S. Prabhakar, "Cadaveric & Living Organ Donation. Natural Limitations. Possible Solutions. Singapore Experience," *Annals of Transplantation* 9, 1 (2004): 31.
[215] *Grace Monthly*, August 1983.

1983. Yen Pei invited Lee Khoon Choy, Senior Minister of State and President of the National Kidney Foundation, to chair the seminar. He also invited three medical doctors, Gwee Ah Leng, Ong Siew Chey, and Kwan Kah Yee, to discuss organ donation, transplant and kidney dialysis from a medical perspective. In his opening speech, Lee Khoon Choy encouraged the people to abandon burial traditions and superstitious beliefs that forbid organ donation. Yen Pei then spoke about kidney donation from a Buddhist perspective. He contended that organ donation is line with the Buddhist spirit of "loving kindness." He also highlighted that the duty of every Buddhist is to "save the life of others and lessen the pains of the misfortunates." Following his presentation, three invited medical doctors took turns to offer their medical views on kidney donation. Gwee Ah Leng talked about the medical concept of "brain dead" which was then a new definition of death for the purpose of organ transplant. Ong Siew Chey spoke about the kidney diseases, dialysis, and transplantation. The final speaker, Kwan Kah Yee, a Buddhist and family doctor, talked about organ donation as a "gift of life." The climax of the seminar was a testimony by a kidney transplant patient and a patient undergoing kidney dialysis treatment. At the end of the seminar, 305 people out of approximately 700 participants pledged their support for organ donation and signed a donor card on the spot.[216]

Following the organ donation seminar, Yen Pei organized a five-day Kidney Care Exhibition at the World Trade Centre in December 1983. He believed that "prevention is better than cure" (*yufang shengyu zhiliao shengyu* 預防勝於治療). The

[216] *Grace Monthly*, September 1983.

exhibition aimed to generate greater social awareness of a healthy lifestyle and diet to prevent kidney problems. Kidney dialysis machines and specimens of kidneys were on display at the exhibition. The exhibition also included a symposium, essay writing competition, game quiz, and drawing contest. Yen Pei convened English-language and Chinese-language panels to educate the public on kidney disease, prevention, and healthy living.[217]

A decade later, Yen Pei remained an advocate for organ donation and kidney treatment. In 1992, he founded the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services-National Kidney Foundation Dialysis Center in a residential estate at Hougang Avenue 1. On June 13, 1992, Yen Pei invited Minister for Information and the Arts, George Yeo, as his guest of honor for the center's opening. SBWS became the first religious organization to bear the full cost of $1.5 million to build the National Kidney Foundation's fifth dialysis center in the northeast region of Singapore. The organization also pledged a long-term commitment to kidney patients and became the first Buddhist group to sponsor an annual $700,000 running cost to support the dialysis centre. At present, the dialysis center has 22 dialysis stations that can accommodate 132 kidney patients either residing or working in Hougang and neighbouring districts. It also provides subsidies and financial assistance to needy patients.[218]

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[217] *Grace Monthly*, December 1983.
[218] *Grace Monthly*, December 1991; "SBWS-NKF Dialysis Centre," http://www.sbws.org.sg/4f_nkf.html (accessed April 11, 2016).

Figure 3.6: Yen Pei at the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services-National Kidney Foundation Dialysis Centre, circa 1990s. Source: *Xinlu*, 97.

A third concern for Yen Pei was drug abuse. In the 1970s, the problem of young drug addicts became an issue of national concern. Young secondary school students began to experiment with drugs such as Mandrax pills and heroin. As the number of addicts increased, the government argued for "a need for harsher measures to tackle what it considered to be a situation that 'had reached epidemic, alarming proportions'."[219] In 1971, the government established the Central Narcotics Bureau—the primary drug enforcement agency in Singapore—to counter the menace. A year

[219] Noorman Abdullah, "Exploring Constructions of the 'Drug Problem' in Historical and Contemporary Singapore," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 7, 2 (December 2005): 50.

later, the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association was founded as a Voluntary Welfare Organization to promote drug abuse prevention in Singapore. At the time, there was only one government-run drug rehabilitation centre on St. John's Island and no halfway houses or aftercare services.[220] Yen Pei recognized the need for Buddhists to be aware of drug abuse and to support the government's efforts in combating the problem. In his sermons, he warned that drug abuse is "harmful to one's health," "ruins a person's future," and "upsets the peace and prosperity of the society". He also stressed that the Buddhist precept opposes intoxication:

> Certainly we are against drug-indulgence. Buddhist opposes intoxication. Drug is more harmful than liquor. Similarly, drug abuse is disastrous. A drug addict loses money, gets ill, destroys wisdom which in turn ends up with a weaker mentality. It is not a right livelihood. It doesn't offer reasonable competition for workers in pursue of material rewards. Despite strong opposition against drug abuse, a Buddhist should in his dealings with the addicts possess a merciful heart. Some addicts after being medicated and rehabilitated, returned to the society for employment. At times due to discrimination, and sarcastic criticism, the addicts fall back. They take drugs over and over again. This is very

[220] "History of Drug Abuse & SANA," http://www.sana.org.sg/about-us/history/ (accessed April 11, 2016); For a history of anti-drug movement in Singapore, see Tan Ooi Boon, *Slaying The Dragon: Singapore's Fight Against Drugs* (Singapore: SNP International Publishing Pte Ltd, 2006).

> regretful. As a Buddhist, one must be sympathetic… [and] assist them in overcoming psychological and material instabilities.[221]

Yen Pei highlighted that Buddhists should be sympathetic to former drug addicts and help them recover and return to society. In 1993, he established Green Haven (*Qingsong yuan* 青松院), the first and only Buddhist halfway house in Singapore to support former drug addicts in their rehabilitation. The SBWS fully funds and operates the institution. Green Haven provides a 6-to-12 month long residential rehabilitation and treatment program for former drug addicts. It offers a wide range of services, including individual, family and group counselling, enrichment courses, community services, aftercare services, and religious, cultural and recreational activities. More importantly, Green Haven assists former drug addicts in seeking both accommodation and employment in the final phase of their rehabilitation program to help them return to their family and reintegrate into society.[222]

In the second phase of his religious career in Singapore from 1980 to his unexpected death in 1996, Yen Pei became a Buddhist social activist and founded the SBWS. Yen Pei's social activism reveals two characteristics of socially engaged Buddhism in Singapore. First, Yen Pei relied on his broad knowledge and understanding of Buddhist teachings and principles to legitimize his social welfare activities. He relied upon Buddhist ideas of compassion, loving-kindness, and the

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[221] *Grace Monthly*, April 1983.
[222] "Green Haven," http://www.sbws.org.sg/4l_gh.html (accessed April 11, 2016).

precept of not taking intoxicants as practical solutions to secular social issues, including elderly care, organ donation, and drug rehabilitation. The ideas of Humanistic Buddhism that center on putting one's faith into action for the betterment and improvement of humanity were probably an important source of motivation for Yen Pei. At a spiritual level, proponents of Humanistic Buddhism believe that enlightenment can be achieved in this world, and therefore, strive to build a pure land on earth. For Yen Pei, one of the ways to practice Buddhism in the human world is to be an active citizen in addressing and contributing to contemporary issues.

Yen Pei was actively engaged with secular social issues, helping to meet a need that the government did not fulfil. As I argued elsewhere, Buddhist activists in Singapore were only involved in defending their religious interests and encouraging social welfare activism, but not in politically sensitive concerns over human rights, the environment, and labour issues as in other countries in Southeast Asia.[223] The nature of Buddhist activism in Singapore was limited by the political context. The strict laws of the government prohibited civil society and religious organizations from organizing mass political and social movements. Rather than engaging in militant confrontation with the government or antagonizing the authorities through public protest, Buddhist activists such as Yen Pei worked closely with the authorities to provide social welfare and community services. In fact, Singapore's PAP government readily co-opted Buddhist activists and was pleased to endorse their efforts. In other words, engaged

[223] Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "The Curious Case of Buddhist Activism in Singapore," *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia* 19 (March 2016), http://kyotoreview.org/issue-19/curious-buddhist-activism-singapore-en/ (accessed April 11, 2016).

Buddhism was adapted to the state of Singapore politics.[224] Yen Pei seemed happy to collaborate with the state authorities. He was a pioneer member and Buddhist representative of the Singapore Presidential Council for Religious Harmony established under the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act that was enacted in Parliament in November 1990. He invited PAP ministers such as Ong Teng Cheong and George Yeo to officiate the opening ceremonies of his social welfare organizations. Therefore, it was no surprise that Yen Pei's contributions to social activism was recognized and honored by the Singapore government.[225]

Conclusion

A close look at two important works on Buddhism in Singapore reveals an interesting shift in the practice of Buddhism in postcolonial Singapore. On the one hand, Vivienne Wee's 1970s article suggests that Buddhism in Singapore from the early days of Chinese migration to colonial Singapore right up to the early decades of the postcolonial period, was a dialectic religion of Buddhist doctrines and Chinese religious practices.[226] On the other hand, Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng's 2003 book highlights the emergence of a "reformist Buddhist" movement that sought to "Buddhicize" Chinese religious syncretism.[227] This chapter, however, seeks to contribute to the discussion by reconsidering the shift from "dialectic Buddhism" to

[224] Chia, "Defending the Dharma," 155.
[225] Yen Pei was awarded the Public Service Medal (PBM) in 1986 and the Public Service Star (BBM) in 1992. See *Xinlu*, 82-83.
[226] Wee, "Buddhism in Singapore," 130-162.
[227] Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng, *State, Society and Religious Engineering*

"reformist Buddhism" in the Singapore context. I use the case of Yen Pei to argue that, first, a global perspective that focuses on the transnational Buddhist networks and movements of people, ideas, and resources can offer greater insights into Buddhist modernism in Singapore, and second, Singapore's so-called "reformist Buddhist" movement can be better understood by contextualizing it within the broader history of South China Sea Buddhism in the twentieth century.

Yen Pei was very much a product of the Buddhist modernist movement in Republican China. Like many of his contemporaries such as Chuk Mor, Yen Pei was educated at Buddhist seminaries such as the Minnan Buddhist Institute, where he became influenced by Taixu and especially Yinshun. Yen Pei's vision of Buddhist modernism, based on the ideas of Humanistic Buddhism, emphasized the incorporation of Buddhist practices into everyday life, and shifting the focus on afterlife salvation to this worldly social engagement. Following the Chinese Civil War, the exodus of prominent Buddhist monks from mainland China to Taiwan and elsewhere led to the spread of Humanistic Buddhism. During Yen Pei's decade-long career in Taiwan between 1952 and 1964, he taught Dharma classes, furthered his studies, and served as a temple abbot. More significantly, Yen Pei made three trips to Southeast Asia in 1958, 1961, and 1964. He preached Humanistic Buddhism to the overseas Chinese Buddhists, contributed to the interactions between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhist monastics, and established connections with the Southeast Asian Buddhist community. In fact, Yen Pei had established a following in Vietnam and was making plans to migrate and build a temple there, if not for the Vietnam War.

Escalation of the war in Vietnam coupled with an invitation to settle in Singapore made him decide to migrate to Singapore.

Yen Pei then spent the last 32 years of his life building a Buddhist community in postcolonial Singapore. His religious career in Singapore can be divided into two phases: the first as the abbot of Leng Foong Bodhi Institute (which he later renamed Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium) from 1964 to 1979, and second, as a social activist and founding chairman of the SBWS from 1980 to his death in 1996. During the first phase of his career, Yen Pei was concerned with the dearth of Dharma activities in Singapore. He therefore focused on evangelism and the promotion of Buddhist education. Yen Pei built a modern auditorium and pioneered activities such as weekly Dharma lectures, group practices, and Sunday school, which were uncommon among Buddhist organizations during that time. Yen Pei also drew on his networks to make Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium a nodal point in the global Buddhist networks, thus allowing him to invite monks from Asia, Australia, and even North America to visit and speak at his organization. The publication and circulation of his *Collected Works of Mindful Observation* earned him a reputation as one of the preeminent scholar-monks of Chinese Buddhism in the region. Yen Pei became a Buddhist social activist and founded the SBWS in second phase of his religious career in Singapore. He was actively engaged with secular social issues that were of concern in the Singapore society. Yen Pei's SBWS played a pivotal role in promoting elder care and filial piety, organ donation and kidney dialysis, and drug prevention and rehabilitation against the backdrop of a rapidly developing Singapore. Yen Pei relied upon Buddhist doctrines

to not only justify the need for Singaporean Buddhists to be socially engaged and contribute to social welfare, but also preached that Buddhist teachings could be used as practical solutions to addressing national issues. It was evident that he sought to create a Singaporean Buddhism through social activism and government collaboration.

An examination of Yen Pei's activities in Singapore reveals that he was concerned with the same kinds of religious and secular activities that Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng suggests that "reformist Buddhists" were engaging in.[228] The form of Buddhist modernism that Yen Pei promoted in Singapore, in response to a range of social imperatives and national concerns, was essentially based on the ideas of Humanistic Buddhism that began in China during the Republican era, brought to Taiwan, and eventually transplanted to Singapore. As a Chinese migrant monk like Yen Pei travelled between Asian countries creating networks and transmitting ideas of Buddhist modernism from one place to another, it was obvious that local politics, religion, and social issues were sources of concern and of opportunity. In other words, Yen Pei's modernist project was as much a product of local conditions as the circulation of monks, knowledge, and funds along the transnational Buddhist networks. A transnational history approach to the study of Buddhism in Singapore can enrich our understanding about the broader development of South China Sea Buddhism during the twentieth century.

[228] Ibid., 233.

CHAPTER 4

Neither Mahāyāna Nor Theravāda: Ashin Jinarakkhita and the Indonesian Buddhayāna Movement

On April 18, 2002, Ashin Jinarakkhita (1923-2002), also known as Ti Chen Lao He Sang (Tizheng laoheshang 體正老和尚), passed away at the Pluit Hospital in Jakarta.[1] Ashin Jinarakkhita, an ethnic Chinese monk, dressed in a Theravāda saffron robe and wearing a beard in the Chinese Mahāyāna style, sat motionlessly in a meditation posture on the hospital bed. Despite his Burmese Dharma name and Theravāda robe, Ashin Jinarakkhita was far from being a Theravāda monk. As his monastic disciples wheeled his body out of the ward, a crowd of lay followers that waited outside the ward was chanting "Homage to the Amitābha Buddha" (*Namo Amituo fo* 南無阿彌陀佛).[2] Ashin Jinarakkhita's body was transferred to Vihāra Ekayāna Graha (*Guanghua yicheng chansi* 廣化一乘禪寺) in Jakarta, where memorial services were conducted four times a day over a seven-day period. Japanese Buddhologist Kimura Bunki 木村文輝, who was present at the wake, pointed out more than 40,000 people including former Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, then Vice President Hamzah Haz, and the leaders of other religions in Indonesia went

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[1] Ashin Jinarakkhita was first ordained as a Chinese Mahāyāna monk and given the Dharma name Ti Chen (Tizheng 體正). He later received his Theravāda Dharma name Jinarakkhita after his higher ordination in Burma. Ashin Jinarakkhita was often known as Bhante Ashin and Sukong (*Shigong* 師公) by his disciples and followers.

[2] My informants told me that the death and funeral of Ashin Jinarakkhita were recorded and made available online. See "The Mahasamadhi of Sukong - (Ashin Jinarakkhita) Part 1," December 11, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZJ4ZlQ_fzY (accessed September 16, 2016) and "The Mahasamadhi of Sukong - (Ashin Jinarakkhita) Part 2," February 27, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOpPBjHdJv4 (accessed September 16, 2016)

to the funeral service. More interestingly, Kimura noted that although Theravāda and Vajrayāna monks attended the wake and recited prayers in accordance to their religious tradition, Mahāyāna monks officiated the important funerary ceremonies. The Mahāyāna monks led the recitation of the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion* (*Dabei zhou* 大悲咒), *Heart Sūtra* (*Bore boluomiduo xingjing* 般若波羅蜜多心經), *Sūtra of Immeasurable Life* (*Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經), *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing* 金剛經), and the name of the Amitābha Buddha in Chinese-language.[3]

Nevertheless, Ashin Jinarakkhita was cautious not to have all his final rites to be conducted in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition in Jakarta where majority of the Buddhists were ethnic Chinese; it would have appeared "too Chinese." As his disciples shared with me in interviews and informal conversations, Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted to shed the image of Buddhism as a religion for the Chinese Indonesians, and promoted the religion as an "inclusive and non-sectarian" (*inklusif dan non-sektarian*) faith for all Indonesian people.[4] Therefore, Ashin Jinarakkhita specified his wish for his remains to be cremated in Bandar Lampung city of South Sumatra. His disciples

[3] In fact, Kimura Bunki points out that Ashin Jinarakkhita specified his wish for the *Diamond Sūtra* to be chanted at his funeral. Although no one knew the reason why Ashin Jinarakkhita specified the *Diamond Sūtra* to be chanted, Kimura speculates that this could be attributed to the monk's personal interest in the Mahāyāna doctrine of "emptiness" (*śūnyatā*) and his veneration of his first tonsure master, Venerable Pen Ching (Benqing 本清). See Bunki Kimura, "Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism: In Memory of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita Mahasthavira," *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism* 23 (2003): 67-68; "The Mahasamadhi of Sukong - (Ashin Jinarakkhita) Part 1," December 11, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZJ4ZlQ_fzY (accessed September 16, 2016)

[4] Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015; Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Sudhamek, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015.

shared two reasons why Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted the cremation ceremony to be held in Sumatra. First, the monk chose Sumatra because it was a center of the historical Srivijaya kingdom, a Buddhist maritime kingdom that flourished between the seventh and thirteenth centuries.[5] Ashin Jinarakkhita had a following of native (*pribumi*) non-Chinese Buddhists in Sumatra who claimed to be the descendants of the historical Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms. For this reason, he decided to use his funeral as a platform to unite his indigenous disciples from Sumatra and his ethnic Chinese followers from Jakarta. Second, Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted to address the problem of "Java-centrism" and sought to promote Buddhism beyond his native Java. Throughout his religious career, he was known as "the flying monk" for his frequent travels to evangelize in various parts of Indonesia.[6]

Ashin Jinarakkhita's funeral reveals how Buddhism overlapped with the issues surrounding ethnicity and nation-building in postcolonial Indonesia. Widely regarded as the first Indonesian-born Buddhist monk (*biksu pertama putra Indonesia*), Ashin Jinarakkhita took it as his mission to propagate Buddhism in the archipelago nation. His Buddhayāna movement, which combined the doctrines and practices of Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhism, had a profound impact in Indonesia, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century. Ashin Jinarakkhita established an inclusive and non-sectarian monastic community, consisting of Sangha from various Buddhist

[5] For a history of the Srivijaya, see O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970).
[6] Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015; Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015.

traditions. He crafted a vision of Indonesian Buddhism as a diverse, yet unified religion in line with the motto of "Unity in Diversity" (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) of the modern Indonesian nation. Later, he introduced the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha to make Buddhism compatible with the first principle of the Pancasila during the New Order era. His vision of Buddhist modernism fit for a diverse and pluralistic Indonesia continues to attract a following of Indonesian people in the twenty-first century.

Previous scholarship has considered the place of Ashin Jinarakkhita in Indonesian history. While some focus on the role of Ashin Jinarakkhita in the "Buddhist revival" of Indonesia,[7] others scrutinize his controversial concept of the Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha.[8] This chapter departs from earlier studies by situating Ashin Jinarakkhita's life, ideas, and networks in the broader history of South China Sea Buddhism. I contend that Ashin Jinarakkhita's attempt to make Buddhism less

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[7] J. W. M. Barker, "Contemporary Buddhism in Indonesia," in *Buddhism in the Modern World*, eds. Heinrich Dumoulin and John C. Maraldo (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1976), 147-153; Yoneo Ishii, "Notes on the Historical Development of Modern Indonesian Buddhism," *Tonan Ajia Kenkyu* 東南アジア研究 18, 2 (September 1980): 257-270; Kimura, "Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism," 53-72; Karel Steenbrink, "Buddhism in Muslim Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 20, 1 (2013): 1-34.

[8] Heinz Bechert, "The Buddhayāna of Indonesia: A Syncretistic Form of Theravada," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 9 (1981): 10-21; Iem Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism and Monotheism," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 18, 1 (March 1987): 108-117; Wilis Rengganiasih Endah Ekowati, "Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita's Interpreting and Translating Buddhism in Indonesian Cultural and Political Contexts" in *Teaching Dhamma in New Lands* (Wang Noi, Ayutthaya: The International Association of Buddhist Universities , 2012), 36-45; Hudaya Kandahjaya, "Ashin Jinarakkhita and Adi Buddha in Indonesia Buddhayana," unpublished manuscript.

Chinese was a calculated strategy to ensure the survival of Buddhism as a minority religion in the world's largest Muslim nation. In contrast with his contemporaries in Malaysia and Singapore who focused on spreading ideas of Buddhist modernism among the Chinese community, Ashin Jinarakkhita's vision of Buddhist modernism was to shatter the image of Buddhism as a religion and culture of the Chinese population in Indonesia. He founded the Buddhayāna movement that promoted non-sectarian doctrines and practices to be in line with the national discourse of "Unity in Diversity." What emerged was a form of Indonesian Buddhism (*agama Buddha Indonesia*) for the modern Indonesian state.

A Chinese in Colonial Dutch East Indies

Ashin Jinarakkhita was born on January 23, 1923, in Bogor, a city in West Java approximately 60 kilometers away from Jakarta.[9] At that time, Indonesia was under Dutch colonial rule. He was given the name Tee Boan An (Zheng Man'an 鄭滿

[9] Edij Juangari wrote an official biography of Ashin Jinarakkhita entitled *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita* (Sowing the Seeds of Dharma in the Archipelago: A Brief Biography of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita) that was published in 1995. This hagiographic biography was based on three interviews with Ashin Jinarakkhita and 46 interviews with disciples, friends, and associates of Ashin Jinarakkhita. An abridged version of the biography with additional materials entitled *Mengenang Seorang Abdi Buddha* (Remembering an Abdi Buddha) was published in 2012 to commemorate the tenth year death anniversary of the monk. See *Mengenang Seorang Abdi Buddha* (Sangha Agung Indonesia and Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia, 2012). Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.

安) by his Chinese immigrant parents.[10] His family resided in a long house along Jalan Roda. His father's name was Tee Hong Gie and his mother's name was Tan Sep Moy. He had two older brothers, Tee Boan Yauw and Tee Boan Hoa. When Tee Boan An was two years old, his mother passed away. Tee Hong Gie remarried his late wife's young sister, Tan Sep Nyie Moy, and had six more children.[11]

In contrary to the image of wealthy Chinese immigrants, Tee Boan An's family was not well-to-do. When Tee Boan An reached school age, he went to a Dutch-Chinese School (*Hollandsch-Chinesche-School*, HCS) for elementary education. He went to school in the day and worked in the afternoon. Tee Boan An and his older brother, Tee Boan Hoa, worked as a deliveryman for a doctor by the name of Tan Eng Ti. They helped the doctor ran errands and collected debts. After receiving their earnings, Tee Boan An and his brother handled the money over to their eldest brother Tee Boan Yauw. During his spare time, the young Tee Boan Hoa enjoyed bathing in the river and hiking around the mountain. According to Ashin Jinarakkhita's biographer, Edij Juangari, the monk fondly recalled his childhood experience of working with his older brother, which taught him to be independent.[12]

Since Tee Boan An went to school, his father noticed that he was different from his peers. Unlike other children of his age, Tee Boan An was more interested in

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[10] His name is sometimes rendered as The Bwan An or Tan Bwan An. See, for instance, Ishii, "Modern Indonesian Buddhism," 264.
[11] Edij Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita* (Bandung: Yayasan Penerbit Karaniya, 1995), 23-24.
[12] Ibid., 24.

learning than playing. The biography suggests that Tee Boan An was "different" because of his experience and close relationship with his grandfather, Tee Teng Hui. Grandfather Tee was a vegetarian and enjoyed meditating in the mountains. Whenever Tee Boan An stayed at his grandfather's place, he would adopt a vegetarian diet just like his grandfather. He enjoyed a vegetarian diet and refused to eat meat when he returned home to his parents; he would only eat vegetables, bean curd, and egg. Tee Boan An's parents were upset with his change of diet and considered a vegetarian diet unhealthy.[13]

Tee Boan An was not the top student in school but performed reasonably well. After completing his elementary education at the Dutch-Chinese School in 1936, he left his hometown to continue his secondary education at the Prince Hendrik School (*Prins Hendrikschool*, PHS) in Jakarta. Previously Tee Boan An wanted to continue his education in Department B (*jurusan B*) of the Dutch Secondary School (*Hoogere Burger School*, HBS), but was late for his application to HBS.[14] Therefore, after spending a year at PHS, Tee Boan An transferred to the second year program at HBS located in Salemba Jakarta. During his time at HBS, he became good friend with his schoolmate, Tan Koen Liang, who was also from Bogor. One day, during his fourth year in school, Tee Boan An talked to Tan Koen Liang about spirits. He frequented Chinese temples near his home in Bogor and knew a great deal about gods and ghosts.

[13] Ibid., 30.
[14] Track B refers to the science track for high school education.

Tee Boan An enjoyed talking to Tan Koen Ling and his playmate, Anyi, about spirits and Yoga.[15]

During his time in school, Tee Boan An became acquainted with a Dutch man by the name of Reigh, a member of the Theosophical Society who claimed he could communicate with spirits. The Theosophical Society was established in New York by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge, and others in November 1875. In the 1880s, a German man named, Baron von Tengnagell, founded the Theosophical Society in the Dutch East Indies. However, little is known about von Tengnagell except that he died in Bogor in 1893, and the Theosophical Society declined following his death. A few years later, Dutch and Javanese elites revived the Theosophical Society, and opened lodges in various parts of Java. In 1901, the Theosophical Society published the first monthly Theosophy magazine in Dutch, and later, in 1905, introduced the Javanese and Low Malay (lingua franca of the Dutch East Indies) edition. The magazine was widely circulated and enjoyed significantly readership among the Dutch and Javanese educated class in colonial Java.[16] One day, Tee Boon An met Reigh when he was walking along Mount Gede. Reigh married a widow and pharmacist, and bought a house near Mount Gede. When Reigh met Tee Boon An, he felt a special affinity with him and treated the boy like his son. He

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[15] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 28-29.

[16] For a historical background of the Theosophical Society in the Dutch East Indies, see Herman de Tollenaere, "The Theosophical Society in the Dutch East Indies, 1880-1942," in *Hinduism in Modern Indonesia: A Minority Religion between Local, National, and Global Interests*, ed. Martin Ramstedt (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 35-44.

imparted Tee Boon An with the skill of magnetic healing (*magnetisme*). Reigh later gave Tee Boon An two books—*The Ancient Wisdom* and *The Secret Doctrines*.[17] Tee Boon An became greatly fascinated by the ideas of Theosophy.[18] Tee Boon An's friendship with Reigh greatly inspired his interest in religion and spiritualism.

In 1941, Tee Boan An graduated from the Dutch Secondary School. He was accepted to study exact sciences at the Dutch-Chinese School (*Hollandsch-Chineesche School*, HCS) in Bandung, the capital city of West Java.[19] His best friend, Tan Koen Liang, also received an offer to study mechanical engineering at HCS. In September that year, Tee Boan An continued his studies in Bandung. He stayed in a dormitory along Jalan Suniaraja. Tan Koen Liang often visited Tee Boan An at his dorm and they would discuss occultism (*okultisme*) and mysticism (*kebatinan*). During their discussions, Tan Koen Liang would ask questions and Tee Boan An would offer his

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[17] *The Ancient Wisdom* and *The Secret Doctrines* are both considered to be seminal Theosophical texts. *The Ancient Wisdom: An Outline of Theosophical Teachings* is a book by Annie Besant (1847-1933), a prominent British social activist and theosophist. This book was first published by the Theosophical Publishing House in 1897. *The Secret Doctrines: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy* is a two-volume book by Russian occultist and spirit medium, Helena Blavatskym (1831-1891), that was published in 1888. Annie Besant, *The Ancient Wisdom: An Outline of Theosophical Teachings* (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1897); Helena Blavatskym, *The Secret Doctrines: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy* (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1888).

[18] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 29-30.

[19] Oiyan Liu points out that the Dutch authorities established Dutch-Chinese Schools in 1908 to decrease Indies Chinese's political orientation towards China and to make them more Dutch-oriented. Therefore, instruction in the Dutch-Chinese Schools was in Dutch, and the curriculum was similar to schools in Europe. See Oiyan Liu, "Countering 'Chinese Imperialism': Sinophobia and Border Protection in the Dutch East Indies," *Indonesia* 97 (April 2014): 105. According to Edij Juangari, the Dutch-Chinese School later became a part of the Bandung Institute of Technology (*Institut Teknologi Bandung*).

explanations. While in school, Tee Boan An became a member of the Bandung Student Corps (*Korps Mahasiswa Bandung*), a student organization whose members consisted of Dutch, new migrants, and descendants of migrants. He also joined a student organization for the descendent of immigrants. Tee Boan An was an eloquent student leader and made many friends in the two organizations. He enjoyed sharing his candies and fruits with his friends.[20]

Tee Boan An's school life was disrupted by the Japanese invasion and subsequent occupation of the Dutch East Indies. In 1942, Japan, which had earlier defeated and occupied British Malaya and Singapore, started their invasion of the East Indies. The Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies was swift and successful. On March 8, 1942, the Dutch in Java under Governor General Alidius Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer surrendered to the Japanese. Subsequently, Japan occupied the Dutch East Indies from March 1942 until after the end of the War in August 1945.[21] During Japanese occupation, classes were suspended and students returned to their hometown. Tee Boan An took a long ride on his bicycle to return to his hometown in Bogor.[22] The Occupation was a difficult time for many in the East Indies. For instance, Japanese authorities imposed restrictions on the domestic trade of

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[20] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 31-32.
[21] For studies on the Japanese invasion and occupation of the Dutch East Indies, see for instance, Harry J. Benda, *Indonesian Islam Under the Japanese Occupation 1942-1945* (The Hague: W.van Hoeve, 1957); Remco Raben, ed., *Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia: Personal Testimonies and Public Images in Indonesia, Japan and the Netherlands* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1999); Bōei Kenshūjo and Willem G. J. Remmelink, eds, *The Invasion of the Dutch East Indies* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2015).
[22] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 33.

food products and rice distribution resulting in the shortage of food supply.[23] Therefore, Tee Boan An volunteered in a soup kitchen to provide food for the needy. Throughout this difficult time, he became more interested in the supernatural and made more friends who were interested in spirituality. Tee Boan An made trips to Solo and Yogyakarta and quickly became acquainted with members of Theosophical Society. He soon became friends with Khoe Soe Kiam, who was also interested in mysticism. They often visited lakes and places where they believed spirits resided.[24]

Tee Boan An also frequented Chinese temples (*klenteng*). As discussed in Chapter 1, majority of the Buddhists in the East Indies were ethnic Chinese and they often worshipped in these Chinese temples that fused elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.[25] Tee Boan An's early exposure to Buddhism at the Chinese temples was primarily in chanting and vegetarianism. There were neither Dharma lectures nor religious classes in those Chinese temples. The monks who resided at the temples were Chinese migrants from southern China; they knew little about Buddhist teachings and were ritual specialists in conducting funerary rites.[26] As it was rare for someone of his age to be a vegetarian, Tee Boan An was well-liked by

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[23] Pierre van der Eng, "Food Supply in Java during War and Decolonisation, 1940-1950," MPRA Paper No. 8852 (May 2008), https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/8852/1/Food_supply_Java_1940-50.pdf (accessed October 22, 2016).
[24] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 35-36.
[25] Leo Suryadinata, *The Culture of the Chinese Minority in Indonesia* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1997), 174.
[26] Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.

the monks at the temples. On the other hand, his parents were not too happy with his interest in religion and spirituality.[27]

Following the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, Indonesian nationalists led by Sukarno (1901-1970) and Hatta (1902-1980) declared Indonesian independence two days later. In the following year, there was an opportunity for Indonesia college students to go to the Netherlands as student-workers. With the end of the Japanese Occupation, Tee Boan An's father urged him to continue his education. As Tee Boon An had no money to further his studies, he took the opportunity to go to the Netherlands. He boarded a ship bound for the Netherlands and arrived a month later. After getting off the ship, Tee Boon An went to look for his old friend, Reigh, in Groningen. Reigh offered him a place to stay. Soon after his arrival in the Netherlands, Tee Boon An submitted an application to the University of Groningen, with the support of H. J. Bakker, a professor of organic chemistry at the university. He was then accepted into the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences to study chemistry.[28]

During his time in the Netherlands, Tee Boan An became an active member of the Theosophical Society. Outside of school, he frequently attended lectures at the Theosophical Society. He also studied philosophy with Professor Peleesnor and Pāli

[27] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 36-37.
[28] Ibid., 37-38.

and Sanskrit with Professor Ny. van der Leeuw.[29] Since the end of his second year in the Netherlands, Tee Boan An started to give lectures at Theosophy gatherings in the Netherlands, and later in Paris and London. By his third year in the Netherlands, Tee Boan An was firmly rooted in religion and spirituality. He was learning the teachings of major world religions and became increasingly interested in the Buddhist doctrines. As his interest in Buddhism started to grow, he decided to devote himself in studying the teachings of Buddha. Therefore, in his fourth year in the Netherlands, Tee Boan An made up his mind not to continue his studies in chemistry; he was determined to learn and spread the Buddhist teachings. His parents and relatives in Bogor were shocked to hear his decision to quit his studies. In 1951, after spending five years in the Netherlands, Tee Boan An returned to Indonesia to pursue his spiritual quest.[30]

Unlike Chuk Mor and Yen Pei who were born in China, Ashin Jinarakkhita was a peranakan Chinese born and raised in the Dutch East Indies.[31] He was educated in the Dutch colonial education system and later studied chemistry in the Netherlands. As told to me by my informants, although Ashin Jinarakkhita could neither speak nor write in Mandarin Chinese, he was a polyglot and could speak Bahasa Indonesia,

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[29] Ibid., 38.
[30] Ibid., 38-42.
[31] Chinese in the East Indies/Indonesia were categorized into "peranakan" and "totok." Chinese born in the Indies/Indonesia was considered "peranakan" and Chinese born in China was considered "totok." The two terms were used to distinguish native-born Chinese from the new Chinese migrants. See G. William Skinner, "The Chinese Minority," in *Indonesia*, ed. Ruth T. McVey (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1963), 97-117; Suryadinata, *Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, chapter 1; Mely G. Tan, *Etnis Tionghoa di Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008), chapter 7.

Dutch, English, Hokkien, and French.[32] And in contrast with his two contemporaries who were ordained at a young age and studied in Buddhist seminaries, Ashin Jinarakkhita was first exposed to Buddhism in local Chinese temples and later learned more about Buddhist doctrines from his involvement in the Theosophical Society. After learning about the various world religions, he became a Buddhist, and would later become the first Indonesian-born Buddhist monk in postcolonial Indonesia.

Becoming the First Indonesian Bhikkhu

When Tee Boan An returned to Indonesia in 1951, the island archipelago was an independent republic under the presidency of Sukarno. Postcolonial Indonesia was a "sovereign state based on a belief in the One and Only God."[33] However, despite being the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Article 29 of the Constitution of Indonesia guarantees the right to religious freedom.[34] Tee Boan An arrived in postcolonial Indonesia with a new look. His appearance with long hair, a beard, and white clothing, shocked his family and friends. He first visited his old friends who were interested in spiritualism. They greeted him with joy and nominated him to be the head of the Three Religions Federation of Indonesia (*Gabungan Sam Kauw Indonesia*, thereafter GSKI), and the vice chairman of the central committee of the

[32] Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.
[33] *Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia* (Djakarta: Dept. of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1967).
[34] See Nadirsyah Hosen, "Religion and the Indonesian Constitution: A Recent Debate," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, 3 (October 2005): 419-440.

Young Theosophy (*Pemuda Theosofi*) group. These positions gave him the flexibility of lecturing and spreading Buddhism. At the same time, Tee Boon An taught in several high schools in Jakarta. His unique appearance made it fast for students to know him. Besides his appearance, "teacher Tee's" teaching style also left a deep impression on his students. According to his students, Tee Boon An was firm but never angry with them. For instance, if his students failed to complete their homework, he would make them redo their work many times. His calm and charismatic personality made him rather popular among his students.[35]

One day, while teaching in the classroom, Tee Boan An unexpectedly entered into a state of thoughtful silence. His students wondered why their teacher suddenly stood silent for no reason. Teacher Tee said he could not continue to teach and hurried home as his friend had passed away. This incident greatly stunned his students. After this bizarre incident, Tee Boan An decided to become an anagārika to spread the Buddha's teachings.[36] As Tee Boan An was the vice chairman of the central committee of the Young Theosophy group, he was often invited to lecture all over the island of Java. During his trips he became acquainted with prominent Indonesian

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[35] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 43-44.

[36] Anagārika literally means "one who does not inhabit a house." This term was adopted by Anagārika Dharmapāla (1864-1933) to denote the "intermediate role between layman and monk." An anagārika is "without home and family ties who nonetheless lives in the world, as opposed to the isolation of a monastery." See Damien Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 12.

Theosophical Society leaders such as Mangunkawatja,[37] Ananda Suyono, and Parwati Soepangat (1932-2016), who would later become his Buddhist followers.[38] He soon gained a reputation for his extensive knowledge on Buddhism and his friendly demeanor.[39]

One of Tee Boan An's first missions was to build a vibrant Buddhist community in the Chinese temples. He noticed that although there were Buddhist monks at the temples, most of them did not lecture the Dharma. Therefore, the anagārika organized religious activities to allow the Chinese community to learn the Buddha's teachings at the temples. He gave regular Dharma lectures and water blessing rites that attracted Chinese devotees.[40] At the same time, Tee Boan An was well-liked by the Javanese population for his humble and smooth (*halus*) attitude. They considered him a religious leader who "deserved to be invited to exchange

[37] Mangunkawatja is rendered as Mangunkawaca in Edij Juangari's *Menabur Benih Dharma.* He was a member of the Theosophical Society and one of the first lay disciples of Ashin Jinarakkhita. Mangunkawatja later became the founding president of Ashin Jinarakkhita's lay Buddhist organization, Persaudaraan Upasaka-Upasika Indonesia.
[38] The late Parwati Soepangat was one of my informants. She was among one of the first female Javanese disciples of Ashin Jinarakkhita and an important founding member of the Buddhayāna movement. For a brief biography of Parwati Soepangat, Heru Suherman Lim, "Parwati Soepangat: A Buddhist Srikandi from Solo," in *Compassion & Social Justice*, ed. Karma Lekshe Tsomo (Yogyakarta: Sakyadhita, 2015), 12-16; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[39] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 44-45.
[40] The water blessing ritual involved the recitation of the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion*. During my fieldwork, I attended one of these ceremonies; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

ideas" (*layak diajak bertukar pikiran*). Therefore, there was little surprise that Anagārika Tee's followers started to grow quickly.[41]

In 1953, Tee Boan An came up with an idea to hold a national Vesak celebration at the Borobudur.[42] Borobudur, a ninth century Buddhist temple located in Magelang, Central Java, is one of the most well-known Buddhist monuments in the world. The Borobudur was abandoned as a religious site following the decline of the Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit kingdom and the rise of Islam in Java by the fifteenth century. In 1814, British governor of Java, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, and his team of archeologists rediscovered the abandoned Buddhist monument.[43] Tee Boan An was quick to draw on historical claims of ancient Buddhist kingdoms to legitimize the need to revive Buddhism in postcolonial Indonesia. He therefore proclaimed that it was his mission to restore the abandoned Borobudur into an active religious site.[44] In earlier times, the Theosophical Society had organized small-scale Vesak celebration several times at the Agung Temple in Bali. Hence, it was no surprise that Tee Boan Ann's proposal was supported by his colleagues from the Theosophical Society and the GSKI. They soon distributed flyers about the Vesak celebration across Indonesia and sent out invitations to officials and representatives of predominantly Buddhist

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[41] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 45.
[42] Vesak is usually rendered as Waisak in Indonesia. In 1983, Vesak became a national holiday in Indonesia.
[43] For a historical overview of the Borobudur, see John N. Miksic, *Borobudur: Golden Tales of the Buddhas* (Boston: Shambhala, 1990).
[44] Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

neighboring countries. Tee Boan Ann and his colleagues also extended their invitations to the embassies of Burma, Sri Lanka, India, Singapore, and Thailand.[45]

The 2497 Vesak fell on May 22, 1953. For the first time in postcolonial Indonesia, some three thousand Buddhists congregated at the Borobudur to celebrate the Vesak Day. A Buddhist flag was placed at the top of the religious monument. Although the celebration was to be held at noon, some arrived the night before. This Vesak celebration marked the first time that Buddhists in Indonesia prayed and meditated together at the ancient site of Borobudur. The event became a national spectacle and made headlines in the news. According to Edij Juangari, even decades later, Ashin Jinarakkhita still fondly remembered the event as the "first Vesak celebration to be held at the Borobudur since the time of Majapahit."[46] He considered the successful celebration a "shock therapy" that surprised and amazed people, and generated awareness about Buddhism. More importantly, he was delighted that the Indonesian public became aware that the Buddhism was alive again in Indonesia.[47]

Days after the Vesak celebration, Tee Boan An gave several lectures in Central Java before returning to Jakarta. Whenever Tee was in Jakarta, he would visit Vihāra Kong Hoa Sie (*Guanghua si* 廣化寺, later became known as Vihāra Vaipulya

[45] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 45-46.
[46] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 46; Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.
[47] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 47.

Sasana).[48] Vihāra Kong Hoa Sie was a branch temple of Putian South Mountain Guanghua Monastery (*Putian Nanshan Guanghua si* 莆田南山廣化寺) located in the Putian 莆田 City of Fujian Province in China. Guanghua Monastery is one of the four great Buddhist monasteries in the Fujian province.[49] As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, Chinese monks from the southern provinces of China migrated to Southeast Asia in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. These migrant monks mainly spoke Chinese dialects, and therefore unable to communicate and preach the Dharma in bahasa Indonesia, the national language of postcolonial Indonesia.[50]

There were several Chinese migrant monks residing at Vihāra Kong Hoa Sie, and one of them was Master Pen Ching (Benqing 本清, 1878-1962), also known as Mahasthavisa Ayramula, whom I have discussed in Chapter 1. Whenever Tee Boan An went to the temple, Master Pen Ching was there to receive him. They spent many hours together discussing the teachings of Buddhism. Tee deepened his understanding of the Dharma from his conversations with Pen Ching. When it was mealtime, Tee was invited to eat with the monks. Tee felt a debt of gratitude to Pen Ching and became his lay disciple. Eventually, he decided to become a monk. In July 1953, Tee was ordained as a novice on the birthday of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. His

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[48] Kong Hoa Sie is the Hokkien pronunciation of Guanghua si.

[49] For a brief history of the Guanghua Monastery, see Wu Tianhe 吳天鶴, "Fujian Putian Guanghua si Shijia Wenfo shita 福建莆田廣化寺釋迦文佛石塔," *Wenwu* 文物 8 (1997): 66-78.

[50] When Indonesia declared its independence in 1945, the founding leaders established bahasa Indonesia as the national language of the new nation. Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 48.

ordination was witnessed by Master Ju Sung, and Venerables Ju Khung, Cen Yao, and Wu Cing. Master Pen Ching gave Tee Boan An the Dharma name, Ti Chen (Tizheng 體正).[51]

Figure 4.1: Ti Chen (second from left) with his Master, Pen Ching (third from left), at Kong Hoa Sie, Jakarta 1953

Photo Courtesy of Edij Juangari

[51] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 48-49; *Untukmu Mahasthavira*, 27.

Several decades later, in a conversation with young Buddhists at Vihāra Sakyawanaram, when asked why he wanted to become the first Indonesian born monk in Indonesia, Ashin Jinarakkhita laughingly replied:

> ... certainly not a broken heart. First, [I] noticed that Islam was already well established in Indonesia and there were many [Islamic] scholars. Catholics and Christians also had many priests and pastors who preached the teachings. However, [there was no one to] preach the sublime teachings of Buddhism. So [I] thought to myself, "If no one is willing to sacrifice, who else [can propagate Buddhism]?" At that time, there were monks. But they rarely spread the Buddha's teachings. They merely took care of a place of worship and taught people to light incense, candles, and others.[52]

Following his ordination, novice Ti Chen resided at Vihāra Kong Hoa Sie in Jakarta. His parents and siblings in Bogor heard the news and could understand his decision. At the monastery, Ti Chen received monastic training in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition and recited Chinese-language scriptures. Although he could not read Chinese, he was able to chant the scriptures with Romanized Chinese pronunciation. Ti Chen studied Chinese Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Diamond Sūtra* and learned Chan meditation (*zuochan* 坐禪) under the guidance of Master Pen

[52] Interview with Ashin Jinarakkhita, quoted in Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 218.

Ching.[53] After several months of monastic training, Ti Chen decided to seek high ordination to become a full-fledged bhikkhu. Nevertheless, he was unable to receive higher ordination in Indonesia due to the lack of required number of monks for the transmission of precepts (*chuanjie* 傳戒). Ti Chen recalled that a Chinese monk in Bandung by the name of Venerable Tong Ie once invited him to obtain higher ordination in mainland China. Ti Chen wanted to go to China, but was unable to do so.

In the biography, Edij Juangari points out that Ti Chen could not travel to China because Indonesia and China did not have diplomatic relations.[54] This however was untrue, because Indonesia and China established diplomatic ties in 1950 shortly after the establishment of the People's Republic of China a year prior. In fact, recent studies suggests that Indonesia and China maintained rather cordial relations until the 30 September Movement in 1965.[55] Nonetheless, the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 did have a detrimental effect on the Buddhism and religion in general in mainland China. Many Buddhist monastics, such as Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Yinshun, feared religious persecution and quickly fled the communist country. While some made their way to Hong Kong and Taiwan, others migrated to Southeast Asia. As I have argued elsewhere, the increase in restrictions and regulations of religions in China gradually led to the disruption of religious networks between China

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[53] Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.
[54] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 49.
[55] See, for instance, Hong Liu, *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949-1965* (Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press Japan, 2011); Taomo Zhou, "Ambivalent Alliance: Chinese Policy towards Indonesia, 1960-1965," *The China Quarterly* 221 (March 2015): 208-228.

and Southeast Asia.[56] This probably explains why Ti Chen could not go to China for his higher ordination in the early 1950s.[57]

As Ti Chen could not seek higher ordination in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition, he considered going to one of the Theravāda countries. Master Pen Ching was aware of Ti Chen's intention and raised funds for his disciple to receive higher ordination overseas. Ti Chen first tried to contact the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Jakarta. However, they were less enthusiastic in supporting his plan. He then contacted the Embassy of Burma, where his intention was greeted with enthusiasm. Coincidentally at that time, Ti Chen got to know about Burmese monk, Mahāsi Sayādaw (1904-1982), who was leading a group of monks in Burma.[58] He would soon travel to Burma to become a disciple of this renowned insight (*vipassanā*) meditation teacher.[59]

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[56] See Jack Meng-Tat Chia, "A Recent Quest for Religious Roots: The Revival of the Guangze Zunwang Cult and its Sino-Southeast Asian Networks, 1978-2009," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 41, 2 (November 2013): 100.

[57] In the winter of 1953, the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China supervised the first post-1949 Chinese Mahāyāna ordination at the Daxian Monastery (*Daxian si* 大仙寺) in Taiwan. My informants were unsure why Ti Chen did not go to Taiwan or Hong Kong for his higher ordination. See *Charles Brewer Jones, Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660-1990* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 105.

[58] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 50.

[59] Insight (*Vipassanā*) meditation, which focuses on perceiving the true nature of reality, is one of the most popular meditation methods today. In his recent study, Erik Braun highlights the pivotal role of Ledi Sayadaw in the popularization of insight meditation in the early twentieth century. See Erik Braun, *The Birth of Insight: Meditation, Modern Buddhism, and the Burmese Monk Ledi Sayadaw* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw was born in 1904 in Seikkhun village near Shwebo in Upper Burma. At the age of six, he was sent to receive religious education from Venerable U Adicca, the abbot of Pyinmana Monastery in Seikkhun. He became a novice at the age of twelve and was given the Dharma name, Sobhana. When he was nineteen, he received higher ordination under the tutelage of Venerable Sumedha Sayadaw Ashin Vimala. Ashin Sobhana studied Pāli scriptures for four years and passed the state Pāli examinations. While studying, he taught in the Taik-kyaung temple in Moulmein (present-day Mawlamyine). Ashin Sobhana's interest in the application of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) started to grow and he decided to study insight meditation under the guidance of Mingun Jetawan Sayadaw (1868-1955) in Thaton. He then underwent a four-month intensive insight meditation training. Thereafter, in 1938, he taught insight meditation method to three students in Seikkhun. The meditation method was well received and Ashin Sobhana began to have a growing group of disciples. Following the independence of Burma in 1948, Ashin Sobhana became the abbot of the Mahāsi monastery in Ingyintaw-taik, where he later became better known as Mahāsi Sayādaw.[60] The reputation of Mahāsi Sayādaw grew and, subsequently, the Burmese prime minister invited him to teach at Sasana Yeiktha in Rangoon.[61] In 1952, his first international meditation center was opened in

[60] Sayādaw is the Burmese honorific for senior monks. Therefore, Mahāsi Sayādaw literally refers to "senior monk of Mahāsi."
[61] *Untukmu Mahasthavira*, 31-32.

Chonburi, Thailand. Since then, Mahāsi Sayādaw's meditation centers spread to other parts of Asia, and to the West.[62]

Soon after, Ti Chen received his visa from the Burmese embassy in Jakarta, he left on a plane for Burma.[63] In December 1953, Ti Chen arrived in Rangoon and was warmly welcomed by members of the Burmese Buddhist community. They immediately brought to him to the meditation center of Sasana Yeiktha, where Mahāsi Sayādaw taught insight meditation. Ti Chen made rapid progress in his meditation training and attracted the attention of Mahāsi Sayādaw. Mahāsi Sayādaw ordered Venerable U Nyanuttara Sayadaw to give individual guidance to Ti Chen. A month later, on January 23, 1954, Ti Chen reordained and received his higher ordination in the Theravāda tradition under the tutelage of his preceptor Mahāsi Sayādaw. Mahāsi Sayādaw bestowed him with the name, Jinarakkhita, meaning "One who is Victorious and Protected."[64]

After his higher ordination, Ashin Jinarakkhita continued to learn insight meditation under the guidance of Mahāsi Sayādaw. However, his stay did not last long. Several months later, he received a letter requesting him to return to Indonesia. The monk wanted to stay and continue his training in Burma. But the letters kept

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[62] For a brief biography of Mahāsi Sayādaw, see Jack Kornfield, *Living Dharma: Teachings of Twelve Buddhist Masters* (Boston: Shambhala, 1996); see also Mahāsi Sayādaw, *The Great Discourse on Non-Self: Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, trans. U Ko Lay (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1996).
[63] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 50.
[64] Juangari translated "Jinarakkhita" as "one who deserves protection and blessings by the Buddha." See Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 57.

coming and, eventually, he gave in to the appeal to go back to Indonesia.[65] In January 1955, Ashin Jinarakkhita left Burma to return to Indonesia. Before returning to Indonesia, he was invited to stop by Malaysia and Singapore to give several Dharma lectures. Ashin Jinarakkhita first attended an event at a Buddhist high school in Malaya.[66] Afterward, he gave lectures at several places in Malaya. He earned the nickname "the flying monk" because he would arrive at a location for a day and fly to another location the following day. After Malaya, he stopped by Singapore briefly and arrived in Jakarta on the afternoon of January 17, 1955.[67]

Ashin Jinarakkhita's biographer points out that the Buddhists in Indonesia was thrilled and excited to see the return of Ashin Jinarakkhita, whom they considered as the "first son of the Indonesia nation ever to become a monk since the end of the Majapahit dynasty" (*putra bangsa Indonesia pertama yang menjadi seorang bhikkhu sejak berakhirnya Dinasti Majapahit*).[68] When Ashin Jinarakkhita came out of the airport, he was greeted by some two hundred Buddhists and members of GSKI. The Indonesian Buddhist community saw the monk as a spiritual leader who would "revive" Buddhism that had "disappeared" in Indonesia.[69] However, the form of Buddhism that Ashin Jinarakkhita sought to promote in Indonesia was wholly

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[65] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 57.
[66] Neither the biography nor my respondents mention the name or the location of the Buddhist high school. However, given the time of the event, my guess is that this Buddhist school was the Phor Tay School in Penang. As discussed in Chapter 2, Chuk Mor became the school advisor in 1954.
[67] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 58.
[68] Ibid., 58-59.
[69] Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.

different from the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom in pre-modern maritime Southeast Asia. Therefore, it is interesting to note how Ashin Jinarakkhita and his followers drew on historical claims to justify the propagation of Buddhism in the Muslim-majority country. What they wanted to do was to dissociate Buddhism with Chinese culture and to present Buddhism as an indigenized religion that was compatible with the modern Indonesian nation.

As I pointed out earlier, most of the Buddhist monastics in Indonesia were dialect-speaking Chinese immigrant monks who resided in Chinese temples. Most were ritual specialists who could not speak bahasa Indonesia; they gave neither Dharma lectures nor religious instructions to the local population. Therefore, Ashin Jinarakkhita's return and his subsequent religious activities marked a departure from the ritual monks in Chinese temples. Ashin Jinarakkhita's novice ordination in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition, and his first choice of China as the place for higher ordination probably suggests that his original intention was to become a Chinese Mahāyāna monk like his immigrant teacher, Master Pen Ching. However, his inability to seek higher ordination in China meant that he could no longer continue his monastic training in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition, and probably the opportunity to learn Chinese language. Unable to go to China, he sought higher ordination in the Theravāda tradition in Burma and studied mediation under the tutelage of Mahāsi Sayādaw. Despite his "conversion" to the Theravāda tradition, Ashin Jinarakkhita neither abandons his Chinese cultural roots nor his Mahāyāna practice. As my respondents shared, Ashin Jinarakkhita continued to recite Mahāyāna scriptures,

exchange greetings with his Chinese followers by saying "Amituofo 阿彌陀佛 (Amitābha)," and venerate the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva after his return to Indonesia.[70] Ashin Jinarakkhita's monastic training tradition both in the Mahāyāna and Theravāda allowed him to be affiliated with the Chinese and Burmese Buddhist networks, and legitimized his Buddhayāna movement based on the hybridized interpretations of Buddhist doctrines.

Dharma Tours and the 2500 Buddha Jayanti

Following his ordination in Burma, Ashin Jinarakkhita spent the next two years of his religious career proselytizing in various parts on Indonesia and generating much-needed publicity for Buddhism. His first missionary trip, or "Dharma Tour" as he called it, started in West Java in 1955. He recruited several lay devotees to serve as his stewards. From Jakarta, Ashin Jinarakkhita visited his hometown, Bogor, and then proceeded to Sukabumi and Cianjur, before arriving in Bandung, the capital of the West Java province. During his Dharma tour in West Java, Ashin Jinarakkhita gave numerous lectures and recruited a number of lay followers.[71] As part of his Dharma tour, Ashin Jinarakkhita organized the 1955 Vesak celebrations at the Borobudur. He invited Buddhists from Java, Bali, and Makassar to participate in the celebrations at

[70] Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[71] Ashin Jinarakkhita shares his travel plan for 1955 in his letter dated November 30, 1954 to Upasika Dayika. See *Tri Budaja* 12 (January 1955): 24; Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 58-59.

the Buddhist site. He also requested the Radio Station of Indonesia to broadcast the ceremony to help spread awareness on the Buddhist festival.

On the afternoon of May 6, 1955, Borobudur was filled with people who mostly came in groups by bus. When it started to rain in the evening and the open-air temple started to get wet but it did not dampen the spirit of the participants. Ashin Jinarakkhita led the participants in the chanting of the *Stanzas of Victory* (*Jayamangala-gātha*) and the lighting of candles. They then circumambulated up the temple. At the top of the temple, Ashin Jinarakkhita and the lay Buddhists participants recited the five precepts. Theosophical Society leader, Mangunkawatja, then led the chanting of the *Stanzas of Victory* and delivered a Vesak Day message. Following that, Ashin Jinarakkhita and GSKI Chairman, Dr. Sasanasurya Khoe Soe Kiam, each gave a sermon. Finally, Moeljobroto, a lay Buddhist leader from Tengger region in East Java, gave a talk on the Buddhist community in the Mount Bromo area of Tengger.[72] The Vesak celebrations continued into the next morning. The morning event was attended by government officials, which according to Edij Juangari, was the first time the Indonesian government authorities sent representatives to participate in a Buddhist event. Ashin Jinarakkhita led a mass meditation session at 4:30 in the morning to close the event. At 5:45 the congregation made their way down the Borobudur. The celebrations ended with a planting of a Bodhi tree, and an acceptance ceremony of a marble statue of the Buddha from Cambodia by Parwati Soepangat, who represented

[72] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 61-62.

the Young Theosophy of Yogyakarta (*Pemuda Theosofi Yogya*).[73] After the event, a lay Buddhist by the name of Goei Thwan Ling offered a piece of land in Semarang to Ashin Jinarakkhita to build a Buddhist temple.[74]

Following the Vesak celebrations at the Borobudur, Ashin Jinarakkhita continued his Dharma Tour and went to Solo (also known as Surakarta), a major city in Central Java. At Solo, he lectured on the teachings of Buddhism along with some volunteers from GSKI.[75] After preaching to the people residing in the cities, Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted to extend his missionary tour to the rural villages in remote parts of Java. He decided to go to places where he knew about the presence of Buddhist communities, even if he had to travel through the mountains and forests. Ashin Jinarakkhita explored the rural villages of Purworejo, Sidoarjo, Probolinggo, Boyolali, Kutoarjo, Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang, and other places in the East and Central Java region. In those areas, he visited several native (*pribumi*) Javanese villages that claimed to be descendants of the ancient Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms.[76] The villagers were delighted to see the arrival of a Buddhist monk and welcomed him to their houses. In the afternoon, the villagers gathered together in the house of the elder to hear Ashin Jinarakkhita's lecture. As most of the rural dwellers could not understand

[73] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[74] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 62.
[75] Ibid., 63
[76] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

bahasa Indonesia, the monk had to rely on a translator to translate his talk into Javanese.[77]

Subsequently, Ashin Jinarakkhita continued his Dharma propagation trip to the Dieng region, a volcanic complex in Central Java. This time round, he was accompanied by several college students from Yogyakarta. Among them was Parwati Soepangat, a prominent member of the Theosophical Society.[78] Parwati Soepangat, an ethnic Javanese college student, became one of the first female disciples of Ashin Jinarakkhita. She served as the Javanese-language translator for the monk in many of his missionary trips. Parwati Soepangat shared with me in an interview that Ashin Jinarakkhita was especially keen to convert native Javanese because he wanted to show that Buddhism was not a religion for the Chinese population, but a universal religion for everyone.[79] Iem Brown, on the other hand, suggests that Ashin Jinarakkhita's attempt to attract indigenous Indonesian converts should be read as a strategy to ensure the survival of a minority religion in the long run.[80]

The missionary team arrived at Dieng region during the full moon Kasada (also known as Kosodo) month on the Javanese calendar. The Tengger community that resided in the area considered themselves as non-Islamic Javanese descendants of the Majapahit kingdom. They preserved a religious tradition called Buda religion

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[77] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 64-65.
[78] Ibid., 65.
[79] Dharmasurya Bhumi, interview by author, Bandung, March 5, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[80] Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism," 110.

(*agama Buda*), which they have in recent times identified as Hindu religion (*agama Hindu*).[81] On this sacred month of their calendar, the Tengger community conducted prayers and ritual sacrifice on the peak of Mount Bromo, which they believed was their "center of the world."[82] As part of their ritual sacrifice, the Tengger people threw live animals as offerings into the volcanic crater. Ashin Jinarakkhita saw this non-Islamic Javanese population as his potential converts. According to Ashin Jinarakkhita's biography, the monk tried to explain the Buddhist teaching of non-killing to the Tengger people and advised them to replace animal sacrifice with flowers. He then led a Buddhist prayer of loving-kindness, while the Tengger community read a prayer in accordance with their beliefs. After preaching to the Tengger people at the peak of Mount Bromo, Ashin Jinarakkhita and his followers went back to the village at the foot of the mountain. The biography further states that Ashin Jinarakkhita successfully converted some of the Tengger people to Buddhism. His trip concluded with a refuge-taking ceremony where an unknown number of Tengger villages became Buddhists.[83]

The biography probably exaggerated the success of Ashin Jinarakkhita's missionary trip to the Dieng region. In fact, when anthropologist Robert Hefner conducted fieldwork in the Tengger highlands in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he noticed that majority of the Tengger people still identified Hinduism as their religious

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[81] See Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), chapter 1.
[82] Ibid., 52.
[83] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 66-67.

affiliation and continued to practice animal sacrifice during the Kasada festival.[84] Nevertheless, this account in the biography is evident that Ashin Jinarakkhita was actively seeking non-Chinese converts in Indonesia. He was targeting the non-Muslim Javanese who claimed ancestry from Majapahit kingdom because he probably thought they would be easier to convert. But more importantly, he was perhaps cautious about not offending the Muslim majority population in the country.

After Dieng, Ashin Jinarakkhita headed east and stopped by Madura, an island off the northeastern coast of Java. From there, the monk travelled over to Makassar, the provincial capital of South Sulawesi. Unlike the Dieng region, majority of the population in South Sulawesi was Muslim adherents.[85] Therefore, it was likely that his target audiences in Makassar were the Chinese. In August 1955, he arrived in Makassar with much fanfare. The local community from the Chinese temples mobilized a welcome committee to receive him at the port. In Makassar, Ashin Jinarakkhita delivered lectures, held healing rituals, and recruited lay disciples. After spending a few days in Makassar, he continued his missionary journey to Bali, an island east of Java. Ashin Jinarakkhita was determined to bring "Buddhist spiritual awakening" (*kebangkitan rohani Buddhis*) to the island of Bali.[86]

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[84] See Hefner, *Hindu Javanese*, chapter 3.
[85] Christian Pelras, "Religion, Tradition and the Dynamics of Islamization in South-Sulawesi," *Archipel* 29, 1 (1985): 107-135.
[86] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 81-82.

Early Dutch colonial officials considered the island of Bali, which has a Hindu majority population, a "living museum of old Java."[87] The island's coasts and highlands were home to many ancient temples. Ashin Jinarakkhita saw the Hindu majority in Bali as potential indigenous Buddhist converts, following his recent visit to Dieng. Incidentally, when he arrived in the Balinese capital city of Denpasar, there were some tensions between Christian evangelists and the Hindu adherents. Apparently, a group of Christian missionaries were proselytizing in Denpasar. They organized healing rituals in the city, and on one occasion, attacked Hindu beliefs and customs. The Hindu majority were offended and retaliated by mobilizing students to protest against the Christian intruders.

Despite the ongoing conflict, Ashin Jinarakkhita's arrival was met with warm reception from the Hindu population. Parwati Soepangat suggests that the Hindus in Bali were welcoming to Ashin Jinarakkhita and his entourage probably because they considered Buddhism as another form of Indian religion similar to theirs. Therefore they did not consider Buddhism as a threat their religion and culture unlike the Christian missionaries.[88] In fact, many Balinese were rather curious to see a Buddhist monk with shaved head and saffron robe showing up on the island. Ashin Jinarakkhita was asked to mediate the conflict between the Christian evangelists and local Hindu adherents. Eventually, the tension was broken. Subsequently, Ashin Jinarakkhita gave lectures and visited several places in Denpasar. At the end of one of his lectures, he

[87] Geoffrey Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 42.
[88] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

asked: "Who is interested in becoming a Buddhist (*Siapa yang berminat menjadi umat Buddha*)?" Although his Balinese audiences were somewhat impressed with his lectures, very few responded to his call for conversion. Nonetheless, Ashin Jinarakkhita considered his trip a success as he thought he had planted the seed of Buddhism in the island of Bali.[89]

Ashin Jinarakkhita returned to Jakarta after completing his first Dharma tour to various parts of Java, South Sulawesi, and Bali. He was rather pleased with his missionary trip. The monk received warm reception not only from the Buddhist community, but also from non-Buddhists, local officials, and even the military. More importantly, he was delighted to see the interest in Buddhism shown by the indigenous Indonesian population. Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted to spread Buddhism throughout the Indonesian archipelago and overseas, but he knew that he could not accomplish this goal alone. Therefore, in July 1955, he established the first lay Buddhist organization in Indonesia, Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists (Persaudaraan Upāsaka-Upāsikā Indonesia, thereafter PUUI), which I will discuss in the following section.[90]

Ashin Jinarakkhita embarked on his second Dharma tour to Java, Makassar, Bali, between October and December 1955. This time, the monk was accompanied by a small group of lay Buddhists from his newly founded PUUI. He traveled wearing a pair of flip-flops, holding a fan in one hand, and woven rattan baskets in another. "The

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[89] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 82-83.
[90] Ibid., 84-85.

flying monk" and his entourage traveled on foot, carpooled, and rode cycle rickshaw (*becak*) to get from one place to the next.[91] In the 1950s where transportation was less accessible and the Global Positioning System non-existent, it was difficult for Ashin Jinarakkhita and his team to travel from one island to another and navigate in the rural villages. They often had to rely on poorly drawn maps and ask for direction from the locals.[92] Notwithstanding the challenges, Ashin Jinarakkhita considered his second Dharma tour a successful endeavor to "bring back the thunder of Dharma to the land of Java, Bali and Makassar" (*membawa hasil gemuruh Dharma di tanah Jawa, Bali, dan Makassar*). To mark the end of the second Dharma Tour, the monk conducted his first insight meditation retreat for twenty-six lay disciples at Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong in Semarang from December 2 to 11, 1955.[93]

The following year, 1956, marked the 2,500-year anniversary of the Buddha's passing in accordance to Buddhist era. The Theravāda Buddhist community around the world celebrated the year of the Buddha Jayanti as the "mid-point" of the Dharma and appropriated the historic event for local purposes. For instance, Buddhists in Sri Lanka used the event to bring together the "religious and nationalist sentiments" of the Singhalese community.[94] The Sinhalese Buddhists in Singapore also celebrated the

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[91] Ibid., 85.
[92] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[93] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 85-86.
[94] See George D. Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation, and Response* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), chapter 3.

year of the Buddha Jayanti.[95] In January 1956, Ashin Jinarakkhita was invited by the Singapore Buddhist Association to visit and lecture in Singapore. On January 22, 1956, he participated in the wall construction ceremony of the Sri Lankaramaya Buddhist Temple in Singapore in connection with the Buddha Jayanti celebrations later in the year. The ceremony was attended by prominent members of the Sinhalese Buddhists in Singapore, including President of the Singapore Buddhist Association, TA Simon, abbot of Mangala Vihāra, Venerable Mahaweera, and Venerable Chandrasiri. At the ceremony, Ashin Jinarakkhita was given the opportunity to give a short sermon in the Indonesian language.[96]

Ashin Jinarakkhita realized that the Buddha Jayanti could also be appropriated as a platform for spreading Buddhism in Indonesia and for connecting Indonesia to the broader Buddhist world. After his two-week stay in Singapore, he returned to Indonesia and formed a celebratory committee to commemorate the Buddha Jayanti in the country. The monk appointed his senior lay disciple, Mangunkawatja, as the chair of the committee.[97] The committee quickly got to work, sending out invitations and promoting the event. At the same time, the newly established PUUI in Semarang got

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[95] For a history of Ceylonese Buddhism in Singapore, see Anne M. Blackburn, "Ceylonese Buddhism in Colonial Singapore: New Ritual Spaces and Specialists, 1895-1935," *Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series*, 184 (May 2012).
[96] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 85-86.
[97] For a list of committee members, see *2500 Buddha Jayanti Fodao erwulingling nian* 佛道弍伍零々年 (Semarang: Persaudaraan Upāsaka dan Upāsikā Indonesia - Semarang, 1956), 179.

together to publish a multilingual commemorative book with a bilingual title *2500 Buddha Jayanti* 佛道弍伍零々年 (*Fodao erwulingling nian*) to celebrate the event.[98]

2500 Buddha Jayanti is an interesting commemorative book that deserves research attention on its own account. The publication contains a forward by India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and congratulatory messages from President of GSKI Khoe Soe Khiam, President of World Fellowship of Buddhists G. P. Malalasekera, and the Ambassador of India to Indonesia B. F. H. B. Tayabji.[99] It also includes essays and poems on the ancient Javanese temples Borobudur and Mendut, essays on basic Buddhist teachings in bahasa Indonesia, Chinese, Dutch, and English, and Buddhist scriptures in Pāli with translations in bahasa Indonesia. The multilingual content of the book reflects Ashin Jinarakkhita's attempt to present the ecumenical spirit of Buddhism and to connect Indonesia to the global Buddhist networks. In his welcome statement, Ashin Jinarakkhita expressed the Buddhist ideal of ending suffering and achieving peace and happiness:

> When you receive this commemorative book, the 2500 Buddha [Jayanti] has arrived. But World Peace still has not been achieved. The vast majority of the world's population continues to suffer; concerns remain. Therefore our message for Buddhists in Indonesia is none other. They should not waste their time, and with all their energy,

[98] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 87-88.
[99] *2500 Buddha Jayanti*, 7-15.

> earnestly seeking ways for the realization of actual Peace. Only with lasting peace and welfare, happiness can be enjoyed by every human being.[100]

The 2500 Buddha Jayanti celebrations were held in May 1956. On May 23, 1956, a day before the actual celebrations, Ashin Jinarakkhita and his lay disciple, Mangunkawatja, attended the groundbreaking ceremony of Vihāra 2500, a new temple that was to be built in Ungaran of Semarang in Central Java.[101] The ceremony was attended by members of a growing Buddhist community from Semarang, Bekasi (West Java), and Jatinegara (East Java). On the following day, the celebration began at six in the evening at the ancient Mendut temple, located about three kilometers east of Borobudur. It was estimated that approximately seven thousand Buddhists from various parts of Indonesia dressed in white to attend the occasion.[102] Ashin Jinarakkhita led the seven thousand strong congregation on a procession from Mendut to the Borobudur. The crowd processed through the Kedu Plain and arrived at the Borobudur at twenty past ten in the evening. They circumambulated the ancient temple that had been sprinkled with flowers and lighted with candles. Ashin Jinarakkhita then led a nightlong meditation starting at midnight and ending the next morning.[103]

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[100] Ibid., 16.
[101] The temple was built at a cost of RP. 100,000.
[102] Theravāda lay Buddhists usually dress in white while Mahāyāna lay Buddhists are dressed in black robes.
[103] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 88-90.

I suggest that the Jayanti celebration at the Borobudur was a spectacle that served Ashin Jinarakkhita well in showcasing the "revival" of Buddhism in postcolonial Indonesia. First, the media savvy monk successfully captured media attention by organizing a large-scale nationwide celebration at the Borobudur. The event was widely reported in the local news media, making Buddhism known to the Indonesian people.[104] The number of participants grew more than twofold, from approximately three thousand when he first organized a Vesak celebration at the Borobudur in 1953,[105] to seven thousand for the Jayanti celebrations in 1956.[106] For Indonesians who were unaware of Ashin Jinarakkhita and his growing Buddhist following, they now knew about the budding presence of Buddhism in the country. Second, Ashin Jinarakkhita was able to use Jayanti to reiterate his historical claim that Buddhism was an indigenous religion of the Indonesian nation. By organizing the event at the historical Borobudur and Mendut temples, he showed the nation that Buddhism had not only been "revived" but also that Buddhists have "returned" to reclaim their long-lost sacred sites in Indonesia.

The first two years of Ashin Jinarakkhita's religious career after his return from higher ordination in Burma was a time of intensive proselytization. The monk was resolute in "reviving" Buddhism in Indonesia by winning new converts and raising awareness about the religion. For his two Dharma tours, he and his lay disciples made numerous trips to both urban and rural parts of Java, Sulawesi, and

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[104] Ibid., 90.
[105] Ibid, 46.
[106] Ibid., 89.

Bali to propagate the Dharma. A few years later, he extended his missionary reach to Sumatra.[107] As pointed out earlier, it is significant to note that Ashin Jinarakkhita was especially interested to convert non-Chinese and Hindu Javanese. However, it is difficult to quantify the success of his religious activities. This was because, on the one hand, the 1930 colonial census only presented the religions of a small portion of the population. On the other hand, the subsequent 1961 census—the first to be published after Indonesia's independence—withheld the data on religion because of its "perceived sensitivity."[108] Therefore, it is not possible to compare the increase, if any, in the number of Buddhists between the last Dutch colonial census of 1930 and the first population census in independent Indonesia conducted in 1961. Nevertheless, in her article, Iem Brown points that Ashin Jinarakkhita managed to fairly quickly attract a sizeable congregation, particularly in the larger cities, such as Semarang, Bandung, Jakarta, Surabaya, and Makassar (Ujung Pandang).[109] These large cities, as I found out in my fieldwork, had a sizeable Chinese population. Hence, it was probable that many of Ashin Jinarakkhita's early converts were ethnic Chinese. Despite the lack of data to confirm the increase in the number of Buddhists, it is likely that the Buddhist population was increasing, as the monk had to set up lay and monastic organizations to manage his followers.

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[107] See Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 131-136.
[108] Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 103.
[109] Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism," 110.

The Making of the Buddhayāna Movement

Ashin Jinarakkhita neither considered himself a Mahāyāna nor a Theravāda monk. Since his return from Burma, he started a new Buddhist movement called "Buddhayāna," which he emphasized, was in line with the Indonesian motto of "Unity in Diversity." His Buddhayāna movement stressed that despite the existence of diverse Buddhist sects and doctrines, they all lead to a "single path" (*Ekayāna*) to enlightenment.[110] His vision of a Buddhayāna movement was to promote an indigenous "Indonesian Buddhism" (*agama Buddha Indonesia*) for a culturally and linguistically diverse Indonesia.[111]

Ashin Jinarakkhita's Buddhayāna movement can be examined both at the doctrinal level and at the practical level. At the doctrinal level, Ashin Jinarakkhita propagated the idea that Buddhayāna—or the Buddha vehicle—was the essence of Buddhism. He thought that the spirit of Buddhist wisdom pervades all traditions. Therefore, the Buddhayāna movement, which was based on non-sectarianism, offered an opportunity for Buddhists to explore doctrines and practices of Mahāyāna, Theravāda, and Vajrayāna Buddhism without having to choose one over the other.[112]

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[110] Biksu Dharmawimala, "Buddhayana dan Kontekstualisasi Agama Buddha Di Indonesia," in *Buddhayana Values* (Jakarta: Keluarga Buddhayana Indonesia, 2012), 10.
[111] Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[112] Dharmawimala, "Buddhayana," 4.

Ashin Jinarakkhita was critical of the view that assumes sectarian Buddhism as "purer" Buddhism. He did not agree that one tradition could be more authentic or superior than another. The monk argued that there was no classification of Mahāyāna, Theravāda, and Vajrayāna during the Buddha's time. He believed that the Buddha taught a variety of ways and stages of practice according to the propensity and ability of each person because every human is different in their traits, tendencies, and abilities. Hence, he considered Buddhism an accommodative religion and highlighted that the Buddha's teachings had always been pluralistic. Ashin Jinarakkhita therefore cautioned Buddhists against sectarianism and obsession with the "purity" of the Buddha-dharma.[113] Ashin Jinarakkhita considered the "Buddhayāna [as] synonymous to the single path [to enlightenment] (*Buddhayāna identik dengan Ekayāna*)."[114] For this reason, he taught that the non-sectarian Buddhayāna movement would bring Buddhists to the core teachings of the Buddha.

The Buddhayāna movement underlines that the fundamental teachings of Buddhism are similar. For this reason, the differences in the methods and practices of diverse sects and traditions were a result of Buddhism adapting to the culture of the locations that the faith had spread to. Ashin Jinarakkhita thought that Buddhism had always adopted the culture of the host country and created new forms of rituals,

[113] Ibid., 7.
[114] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

intellectual ideas, and social activities. Hence, he highlighted the need to contextualize the differences among the Buddhist sects.[115]

As Venerable Dharmavimala, a prominent disciple of Ashin Jinarakkhita explained to me, the Buddhayāna movement conceptualizes Buddhism as a religion within three concentric circles (see Figure 2). The innermost circle is the "core teaching" (*inti ajaran*) and liberating dimension of Buddhism. Followers of Buddhayāna believe that the fundamental teachings of Buddhism are the same, regardless of sect. The next circle is the "method" (*metode*). Dharmavimala suggests that the methods of practice are different because the Buddha taught different methods to different disciples according to their personal capacity and karmic circumstances. Finally, the outermost circle is "culture" (*budaya*), which makes one form of Buddhism seemingly different from another. As Dharmavimala points out, the Buddhayāna movement promotes the need to look beyond the layers of "method" and "culture" in order to get to the "core" of the Buddha's teachings.[116] It seems that this justification is embedded in a nationalist discourse depicting a multicultural Indonesia in unity. This, I would suggest, was a strategy of Ashin Jinarakkhita to make Buddhism in harmony with the modern Indonesian state.

[115] Dharmawimala, "Buddhayana," 4-5.
[116] Dharmawimala, "Buddhayana," 4-5; Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.

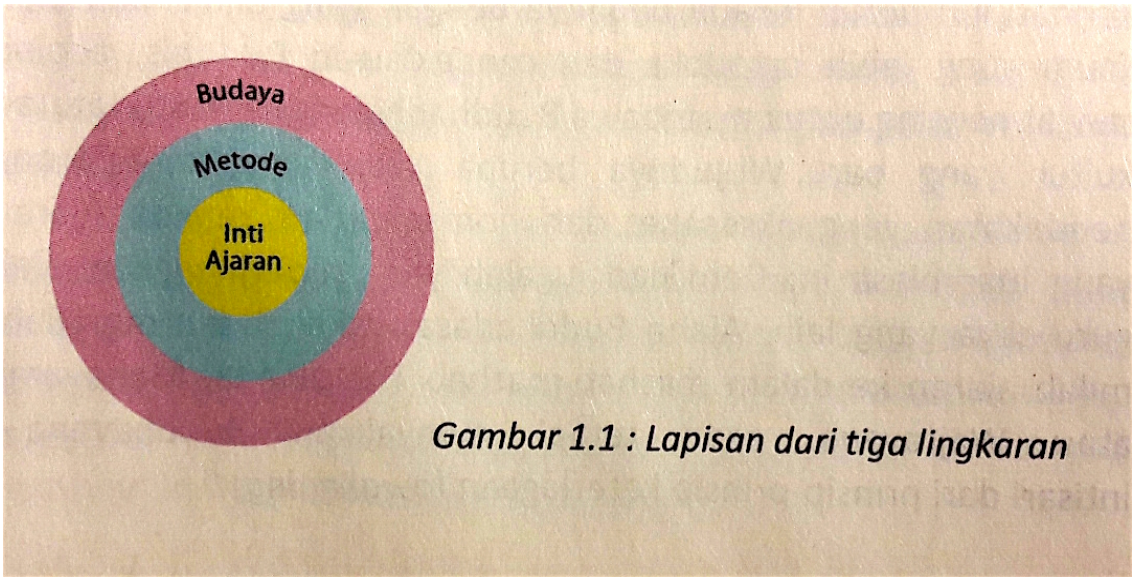

Figure 4.2: Explaining Buddhism in Three Concentric Circles

Source: Dharmawimala, "Buddhayana," 4.

In terms of practice, Ashin Jinarakkhita encouraged a non-sectarian mixing of doctrines and liturgy. He preached that Buddhists should not become fixated on a single sectarian practice, and consider another approach wrong and inferior. The monk encouraged his followers to discern for themselves what is most suitable for their own practice.[117] On the personal level, Ashin Jinarakkhita kept the Theravāda percepts of not handling money and not eating after noon, and at the same time, maintained the Mahāyāna practice of vegetarianism. According to my respondents, he did so to bridge the practices of both Buddhist traditions.[118] And as I mentioned earlier, Ashin Jinarakkhita could not go to communist China in the 1950s to receive his higher

[117] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 183-184.
[118] Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

ordination in the Mahāyāna tradition because of the political situation. Therefore, since the revival of Chinese Mahāyāna ordination ceremony in Taiwan, Ashin Jinarakkhita had always wanted to receive the bodhisattva precepts.[119] Eventually, in 1976, Ashin Jinarakkhita went to Taiwan to receive the bodhisattva precepts.[120] Later in the 1980s, he grew a beard to look like a Mahāyāna elder monk, but continued to dress in Theravāda robes.[121] From his personal practice and his appearance, it was evident that Ashin Jinarakkhita wanted to stress that he was neither a Theravāda nor a Mahāyāna monk, but a combination of both. When the Dalai Lama met Ashin Jinarakkhita during his visit to Indonesia in 1976, he was probably confused by Ashin Jinarakkhita's sectarian affiliation, and asked, "To what sect of Buddhism do you belong?" To which Ashin Jinarakkhita candidly responded, "I am just a servant of the Buddha."[122]

During my fieldwork, I found a liturgical book entitled *A Guide to the Buddha Dhamma* (*Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*), which offers fascinating insights into the liturgical practices of the Buddhayāna followers. As told to me by my informant Parwati Soepangat, this liturgical book compiled by Waicakajaya Ananda Susilo under the supervision of Ashin Jinarakkhita, was published in 1967 by the PUUI for mass

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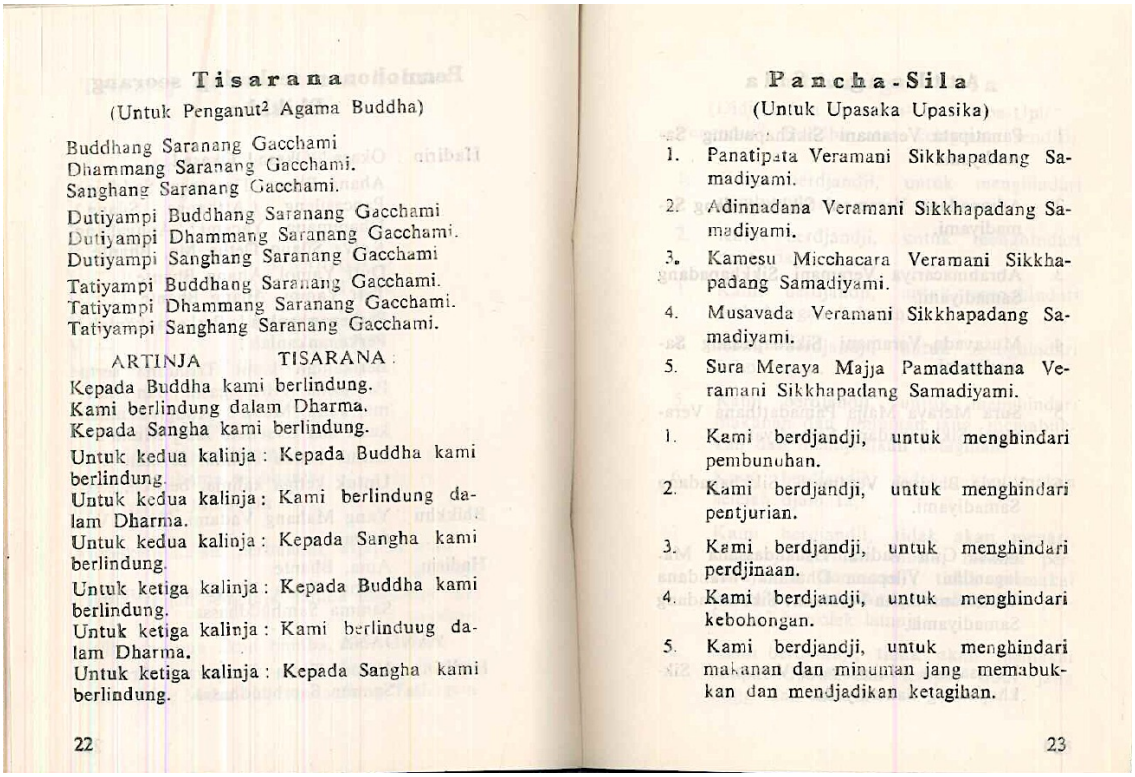
[119] In the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition, a preceptee (*jiezi* 戒子) undergoes the higher ordination by first receiving the novice precepts (*shami jie* 沙彌戒), followed by the bhikṣu precepts (*biqiu jie* 比丘戒), and finally, the bodhisattva precepts (*pusa jie* 菩薩戒).
[120] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 203.
[121] Ibid., 206.
[122] Ibid., 203.

circulation among members of the Buddhayāna movement.[123] This liturgical book reveals two major characteristics of the liturgical practice of the movement. First, it demonstrates the attempt to indigenize Buddhism in Indonesia. For instance, the national anthem of Indonesia was printed in the opening pages of the liturgical text.[124] The printing of national anthem in Buddhist liturgical books was a practice that was very uncommon or even unheard of. This could be read as an attempt by Ashin Jinarakkhita to present Buddhism as a nationalistic religion in Indonesia. Furthermore, the Pāli devotional passages and scriptures were translated into bahasa Indonesia with both languages side by side (see Figure 3). Parwati Soepangat explained that since most Indonesian Buddhists could read neither Pāli nor Sanskrit, the bahasa Indonesia translations helped them understand the passages they chant.[125] As Ashin Jinarakkhita points out in the Foreword of the book:

> With the publication of this book which, though brief, but clear enough for those who want to know about this *ancient philosophy of the Indonesian nation*.

[123] According to Parwati Soepangat, this liturgical book was popularly used by adherents of the Buddhayāna movement until the 1970s when a new text was published to include the recitation of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha. Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[124] Upasaka Waicakajaya Ananda Susilo and J. A. Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita, *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma* (Tjirebon: PERBUDI/PUUI Dewwan Tjirebon, 1967), 3-4.
[125] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

If you remember that there are few quality books about Buddhism in the Indonesian language, [you will know that] this book is a very useful contribution to the people of Indonesia in general and the Buddhists in particular.[126]



Tisarana

(Untuk Penganut² Agama Buddha)

Buddhang Saranang Gacchami
Dhammang Saranang Gacchami.
Sanghang Saranang Gacchami.
Dutiyampi Buddhang Saranang Gacchami
Dutiyampi Dhammang Saranang Gacchami.
Dutiyampi Sanghang Saranang Gacchami
Tatiyampi Buddhang Saranang Gacchami.
Tatiyampi Dhammang Saranang Gacchami.
Tatiyampi Sanghang Saranang Gacchami.

ARTINJA TISARANA :

Kepada Buddha kami berlindung.
Kami berlindung dalam Dharma.
Kepada Sangha kami berlindung.
Untuk kedua kalinja : Kepada Buddha kami berlindung.
Untuk kedua kalinja : Kami berlindung dalam Dharma.
Untuk kedua kalinja : Kepada Sangha kami berlindung.
Untuk ketiga kalinja : Kepada Buddha kami berlindung.
Untuk ketiga kalinja : Kami berlinduug dalam Dharma.
Untuk ketiga kalinja : Kepada Sangha kami berlindung.

22

Pancha-Sila

(Untuk Upasaka Upasika)

1. Panatipata Veramani Sikkhapadang Samadiyami.
2. Adinnadana Veramani Sikkhapadang Samadiyami.
3. Kamesu Micchacara Veramani Sikkhapadang Samadiyami.
4. Musavada Veramani Sikkhapadang Samadiyami.
5. Sura Meraya Majja Pamadatthana Veramani Sikkhapadang Samadiyami.

1. Kami berdjandji, untuk menghindari pembunuhan.
2. Kami berdjandji, untuk menghindari pentjurian.
3. Kami berdjandji, untuk menghindari perdjinaan.
4. Kami berdjandji, untuk menghindari kebohongan.
5. Kami berdjandji, untuk menghindari makanan dan minuman jang memabukkan dan mendjadikan ketagihan.

23

Figure 4.3: Pāli Devotional Passages with Indonesian Translation Side By Side

Source: *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*, 22-23.

Second, the liturgical book reveals a hybrid mix of Theravāda and Mahāyāna devotion practices among Buddhayāna members. I noticed that although the liturgical

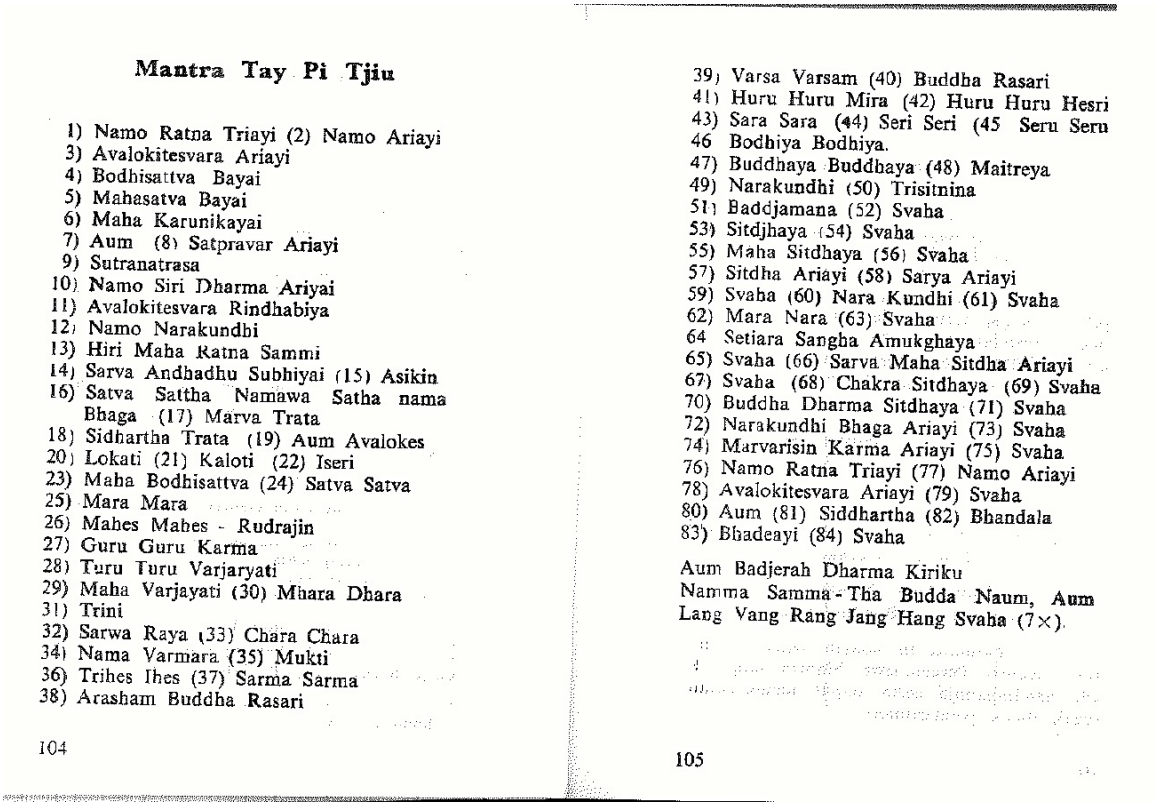
[126] Emphasis added. Ashin Jinarakkhita, "Wedjangan Sang Pengasuh," in *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*, 6.

book appears like a usual Theravāda Pāli-language liturgical text that begins with the Salutation to the Buddha (*vandanā*), Threefold Refuge (*tisarana*), and Five Percepts (*pañcasīlāni*) followed by Pāli scriptures such as *Discourse on Blessings* (*Mahā-mangala Sutta*) and *Discourse on Jewels* (*Ratana Sutta*),[127] it also contains Mahāyāna scriptures and mantras. For instance, the book includes the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion* in its Hokkien transliterated title *Tay Pi Tjiu* (*Dabei zhou* 大悲咒).[128] The Sanskrit mantra has been transliterated into roman characters (see Figure 4). It also contains instructions for making "healing water" (*air penjembuhan*) with the recitation the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion* and the mantra of the *Heart Sūtra*.[129] Additionally, the liturgical book contains a short article entitled "Theravāda and Mahāyāna" (*Theravada dan Mahayana*) to highlight the non-sectarian and multi-traditional orientation of the Buddhayāna movement. The article emphasizes that:

> The Buddha taught the same fundamental knowledge of the Dhamma [and] emptiness, and welfare for the absolute liberation from suffering, [known as] Nibbāna.
>
> Both Theravāda and Mahāyāna teach a similar lesson with the same objective; [nonetheless] they have quite different religious ceremonies.

[127] See *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*, 21-23, 43-51.
[128] Ibid., 103-105.
[129] Ibid., 106.

In Mahāyāna, [there are] a lot of elaborate religious ceremonies, while Theravada [religious ceremonies] are very simple.[130]



Mantra Tay Pi Tjiu

1) Namo Ratna Triayi (2) Namo Ariayi
3) Avalokitesvara Ariayi
4) Bodhisattva Bayai
5) Mahasatva Bayai
6) Maha Karunikayai
7) Aum (8) Satpravar Ariayi
9) Sutranatrasa
10) Namo Siri Dharma Ariyai
11) Avalokitesvara Rindhabiya
12) Namo Narakundhi
13) Hiri Maha Ratna Sammi
14) Sarva Andhadhu Subhiyai (15) Asikin
16) Satva Sattha Namawa Satha nama Bhaga (17) Marva Trata
18) Sidhartha Trata (19) Aum Avalokes
20) Lokati (21) Kaloti (22) Iseri
23) Maha Bodhisattva (24) Satva Satva
25) Mara Mara
26) Mahes Mahes - Rudrajin
27) Guru Guru Karma
28) Turu Turu Varjaryati
29) Maha Varjayati (30) Mhara Dhara
31) Trini
32) Sarwa Raya (33) Chara Chara
34) Nama Varmara (35) Mukti
36) Trihes Ihes (37) Sarma Sarma
38) Arasham Buddha Rasari

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39) Varsa Varsam (40) Buddha Rasari
41) Huru Huru Mira (42) Huru Huru Hesri
43) Sara Sara (44) Seri Seri (45 Seru Seru
46 Bodhiya Bodhiya.
47) Buddhaya Buddhaya (48) Maitreya
49) Narakundhi (50) Trisitnina
51) Baddjamana (52) Svaha
53) Sitdjhaya (54) Svaha
55) Maha Sitdhaya (56) Svaha
57) Sitdha Ariayi (58) Sarya Ariayi
59) Svaha (60) Nara Kundhi (61) Svaha
62) Mara Nara (63) Svaha
64 Setiara Sangha Amukghaya
65) Svaha (66) Sarva Maha Sitdha Ariayi
67) Svaha (68) Chakra Sitdhaya (69) Svaha
70) Buddha Dharma Sitdhaya (71) Svaha
72) Narakundhi Bhaga Ariayi (73) Svaha
74) Marvarisin Karma Ariayi (75) Svaha
76) Namo Ratna Triayi (77) Namo Ariayi
78) Avalokitesvara Ariayi (79) Svaha
80) Aum (81) Siddhartha (82) Bhandala
83) Bhadeayi (84) Svaha

Aum Badjerah Dharma Kiriku
Namma Samma - Tha Budda Naum, Aum
Lang Vang Rang Jang Hang Svaha (7×).

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Figure 4.4: Mantra Tay Pi Tjiu (*Dabei zhou* 大悲咒) or Better Known as the *Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion*

Source: *Penuntun Buddha Dhamma*, 104-105.

As the Buddhayāna movement started to grow, Ashin Jinarakkhita felt the need to establish a society to organize his followers. In July 1955, he established Indonesia's first lay Buddhist organization, Indonesian Fraternity of Lay Buddhists

[130] Ibid., 308.

(Persaudaraan Upāsaka-Upāsikā Indonesia, thereafter PUUI) to organize his lay disciples and to train lay Buddhist teachers to help him spread the Dharma.[131] Ashin Jinarakkhita selected the city of Semarang in Central Java to be the headquarter of his organization. In his study of the Chinese in Semarang, Donald Earl Willmott points out that Ashin Jinarakkhita came to Semarang several times in the spring of 1955. The monk gave a number of lectures at the Kong Tik Soe Temple (*Gongde ci* 功德祠), the Hwa Joe Hwee Koan, and the meetinghouse of the Theosophical Society. While there he also officiated religious ceremonies at the Tay Kak Sie Temple and taught meditation. According to the chairman of the Semarang Society, the monk recruited six young Indonesian and eleven Chinese (including two girls) as his lay disciples.[132] Willmott explains Ashin Jinarakkhita's success in gaining converts in Semarang:

> There is no doubt about the Bhikkhu's ability to inspire those who hear him. He is young, soft-spoken, and modest, but speaks with great conviction and clarity. He appears to be especially calm and untroubled inwardly. His hearers are also greatly impressed by the fact that he

[131] PUUI was renamed Indonesian Buddhist Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Agama Buddha Indonesia) in March 1972, and later renamed again as the Indonesian Council of Buddhist Upasaka and Pandita Buddhism (Majelis Upasaka Pandita Agama Buddha Indonesia) in 1976. Eventually, in May 1979, the lay Buddhist organization was renamed the Indonesian Buddhayāna Council (Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia). See *Perkumpulan Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia: Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga* (Lembaga Ortala, 2014), 1-2.

[132] Donald Earl Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang: A Changing Minority Community in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 252.

renounced wealth and professional success for a life of simplicity and poverty.[133]

Following the Vesak Celebrations of 1955, a lay disciple by the name of Goei Thwan Ling donated a piece of land in Ungaran, near the city of Semarang. Ashin Jinarakkhita soon built a simple temple on this land and named it Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong. Thereafter, he would often visit to Semarang to lecture and teach meditation. Whenever Ashin Jinarakkhita was at Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong, many devotees would go to listen to his lectures. Some went to the monk to seek his advice for their life problems. With his growing popularity and following, Ashin Jinarakkhita established the PUUI at Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong in Semarang in July 1955. At the inaugural meeting of the PUUI, Ashin Jinarakkhita's senior lay disciple, Mangunkawatja, was elected as the chairman and, R. Sumana alias Oei Sin Liong as the secretary.[134]

[133] Ibid., 252-253.
[134] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 70-72.

Figure 4.5: Ashin Jinarakkhita (second row, seventh from left) with Leaders of the PUUI at Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong, Semarang, 1955

Photo Courtesy of Edij Juangari

During the time when there were few Buddhist monks in Indonesia, Ashin Jinarakkhita being the only Indonesian born cleric, recognized an urgent need to train lay disciples to spread the Buddhist teachings. The PUUI became an important forum for Ashin Jinarakkhita to organize his lay followers and to train lay Buddhist leaders to spread his message. Ashin Jinarakkhita started to ordain his senior disciples who possessed good knowledge of the Buddha-dharma as Pandita,[135] or lay preachers, to serve the needs of a growing congregation.[136] He ordained his lay disciples such as Sariputra Sadono, R. Sumana, Mangunkawatja, Tengger, and Ananda Suyono in the

[135] Paṇḍita is a Sanskrit word meaning "learned scholar."
[136] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015; Sudhamek, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015.

area of Central Java, and disciples including Khoe Soe Kiam, Ong Tiang Biauw, and others in West Java as lay leaders for the Buddhayāna movement. The Panditas were trained to lead Buddhist funeral ceremonies, bless Buddhist weddings, and especially, to give Dharma lectures. Initially, after Ashin Jinarakkhita finished giving a lecture, he would request his lay preachers, who accompanied him during his missionary trips, to respond to questions during the Questions and Answers session at the end of his talk. As his disciples became more confident, Ashin Jinarakkhita would lecture for half the time and request his Panditas lecture for the second half. As time went on, the lay preachers were given the opportunity to prepare and give their own lectures in various parts of Java. Before long, PUUI started to establish branches in the cities of East and West Java.[137]

The PUUI was an important forum for Ashin Jinarakkhita to train and assemble a pool of lay preachers to help him spread Buddhism in various parts of Indonesia. In the 1950s, when communication and transport system in Indonesia was less accessible, Ashin Jinarakkhita had limited time and energy to travel from one place to another to teach and meet with his increasing number of followers. Therefore, the Panditas played a crucial supporting role in ministering the congregation. The use of lay preachers made it possible for the Buddhayāna movement to grow quickly within the span of a few years.[138]

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[137] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 72.
[138] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

With the success of PUUI, Ashin Jinarakkhita realized the effectiveness of having disciples to help him propagate the Dharma all over the Indonesian archipelago. He believed that the establishment of a Sangha community could help him further expand the Buddhayāna movement in Indonesia. For this reason, he encouraged his lay disciples to consider becoming a monk. Soon, one of his older lay disciples by the name of Ong Tiang Biaw expressed interest in becoming a monk. Ong Tiang Biaw, a Chinese Indonesian aged 61, who Ashin Jinarakkhita used to call "uncle" at his younger age, became a lay disciple of Ashin Jinarakkhita after he became a monk. Ashin Jinarakkhita later appointed him as a Pandita for his knowledge in the Buddha-dharma. After serving as a lay preacher for some time, he decided to become a monk under the tutelage of Ashin Jinarakkhita. Later, two more lay disciples wanted to seek ordination. They were Ki Sontomihardjio, a 70-year-old retired schoolteacher from Kutoarjo, Central Java, and Ketut Tangkas, a bachelor who is approaching 30 years old.[139]

With three prospective monastic disciples, Ashin Jinarakkhita went forward to organize the first ordination ceremony in postcolonial Indonesia over the Vesak month of 1959. He decided not to invite Chinese migrant monks from local Chinese temples in Java to be involved in the event. As pointed out earlier, a majority of these monks were Chinese-speaking ritual specialists who knew little about Buddhist doctrines. Hence, Ashin Jinarakkhita relied on his networks to invite fourteen monks from East, South, and Southeast Asia to officiate the ordination ceremony: seven from Sri Lanka,

[139] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 116-118.

three from Thailand, two from Cambodia, and one each from Burma and Japan (see Table 3). The list of invitees included his teacher, Mahāsi Sayādaw, and his longtime friend, Narada Mahathera.[140] In Jakarta, Ashin Jinarakkhita formed a special committee to receive the entourage of monks who would be arriving in Indonesia over several days. He mobilized his followers in Java to raise funds for the cost of lodging, food, and transportation for the sacred event.[141]

Name	**Place of Origin**
1. Narada Mahathera	Sri Lanka
2. Ariyavamsa Mahathera	Sri Lanka
3. Satthissara Mahathera	Sri Lanka
4. Mahanama Mahathera	Sri Lanka
5. Piyadassi Mahathera	Sri Lanka
6. Saranapala Mahathera	Sri Lanka
7. Kavivorayan Thera	Sri Lanka
8. Maha Somroeng Mahathera	Thailand
9. Visal Samanagung Mahathera	Thailand
10. Kru Champirat Thera	Thailand
11. Candovauno (Ung Mean) Mahathera	Cambodia
12. Somdach Choun Nath Mahathera	Cambodia
13. Mahāsi Sayādaw Mahathera	Burma
14. Bhikṣu Kimura	Japan

Table 3: List of Invitees for the 1959 Ordination Ceremony

Source: Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 122.

[140] Ibid, 222.
[141] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 117.

The Buddhist community in Jakarta greeted the arrival of the fourteen monks entourage with enthusiasm. On May 17, 1959, the first ordination ceremony was held in Jakarta to ordain Ong Tiang Biaw as a novice; he was given the name Jinaputta. After the ordination ceremony, Ashin Jinarakkhita seized the opportunity to bring his guests on a Dharma propagation tour around Java. He first brought them to Vihāra Vimala Dharma in Bandung, and then to Central Java, via Tegal and Pekalongan. In Central Java, the Sangha entourage resided at Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong in Semarang. On the morning of May 21, 1959, a second ordination ceremony was held at Vihāra Buddhagaya Watugong for the ordination of Ki Sontomihardjio and Ketut Tangkas. The two newly minted novices were given the names, Jinananda and Jinapiya, respectively.[142] The following day, on May 22, a higher ordination ceremony was performed to ordain Jinaputta into a full-fledged Bhikkhu.[143] In his sermon at the ordination ceremony, Narada Mahathera said:

> Novice Jinaputta's ordination ceremony was an arduous job for many ordinary people. Now that [he] has became a novice and now as a full-fledged monk, [he] must serve Buddhism. On May 21, 1959, an international Sīmā [144] was formed for the [higher] ordination of Jinaputta at Bodhgaya Watugong.

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[142] Ibid., 116-118.
[143] Ibid., 119.
[144] Simā refers to the boundary that defines "the space within which all members of a single local community have to assemble as a complete Sangha." See Petra Kieffer-

> After becoming a bhikkhu, Jinaputta must remain humble, and not be arrogant by his position and obligations. [He must strive] for the welfare of all mankind and for the development of Buddhism. Other than that, Jinaputta must live a simple life, and be physically and spiritually pure inside and out.[145]

After the higher ordination event, Ashin Jinarakkhita celebrated Vesak with his fourteen foreign guests, three newly ordained monastic disciples, and several thousands of followers at the Borobudur. Following the Vesak celebrations, Ashin Jinarakkhita organized another higher ordination ceremony in Bali on June 3, 1959. This time, the Sangha entourage officiated the higher ordination of Jinapiya.[146] With the conclusion of the ordination ceremonies in Indonesia, the fourteen monks returned to their respective countries.

Ashin Jinarakkhita deemed the first ordination ceremony in postcolonial Indonesia a success. Not only was he able to strengthen his networks with the monastic fraternity in other countries, but he also had three monastic disciples to assist him in expanding the Buddhayāna movement in Indonesia.[147] Furthermore, the media

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Pülz, "Rules for the Sīmā in the Vinaya and its Commentaries and their Application in Thailand," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 20, 2 (1997): 141-153.

[145] *Tri Budaja* 65 (June 1959).

[146] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 121-122.

[147] Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015.

coverage of the visiting monks and ordination ceremonies provided good publicity for Ashin Jinarakkhita's Buddhayāna movement. The Indonesians now knew about the establishment of an Indonesian-born Sangha community in Indonesia.

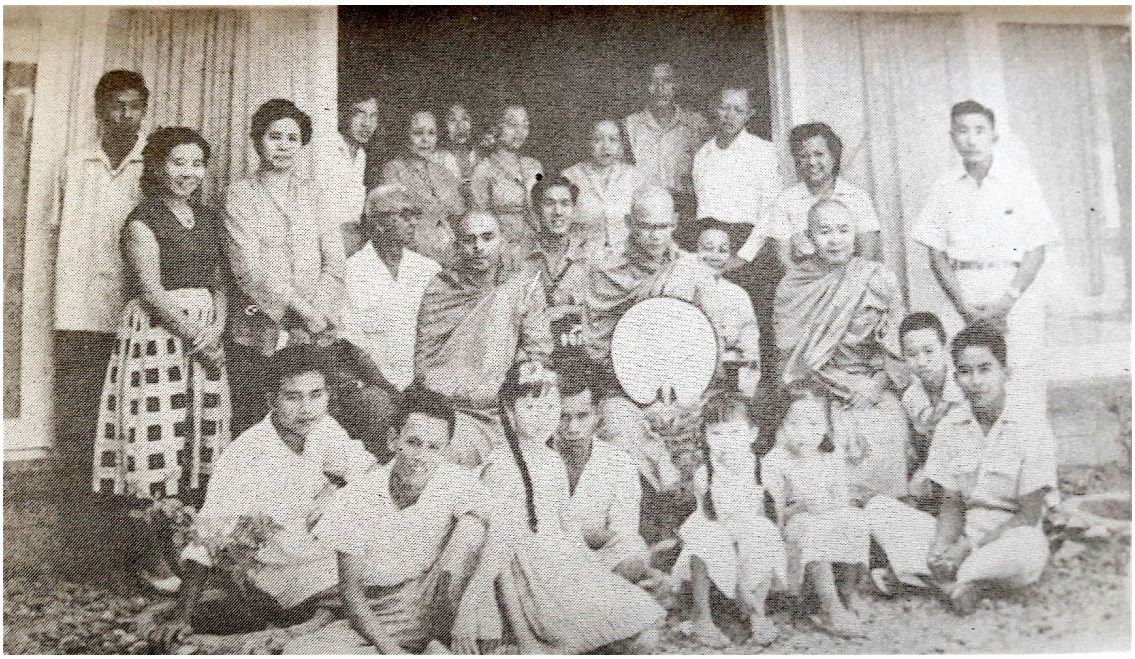

Figure 4.6: Ashin Jinarakkhita (second row, first from right) with Mahāsi Sayādaw Mahathera (second row, second from right) and Piyadassi Mahathera (second row, third from right) at Vihāra Vimala Dharma in Bandung, 1959 Photo Courtesy of Edij Juangari

Over the next couple of years, Ashin Jinarakkhita attempted to recruit monastic disciples, and he soon recognized the necessity to establish a Sangha organization to represent the Sangha community in Indonesia. On January 23, 1963, Ashin Jinarakkhita, along with his disciples Bhikkhu Jinaputta, Bhikkhu Jinapiya, and Samanera Jinananda, founded the Maha Sangha Indonesia in Bandung. The Sangha

union aimed to serve as a "shelter for monks and nuns from the traditions of Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna with a Buddhayāna view" (*bernaung para biksu dan biksuni yang berasal dari tradisi Therawada, Mahayana, dan Wajrayana yang memiliki pandangan Buddhayana*).[148] Shortly after the founding of Maha Sangha Indonesia, Ashin Jinarakkhita took the momentous decision of ordaining the first Buddhist nun in Indonesia. During the early 1960s, bhikṣuṇī ordination in the Theravāda tradition was unheard of, and it remains a point of contention among the Theravādin communities in contemporary South and Southeast Asia.[149]

Despite being dressed in Theravāda robes, Ashin Jinarakkhita saw himself neither as a Mahāyāna nor a Theravāda monk. As the first Indonesian-born monk and founder of the Buddhayāna movement, he probably did not have the baggage of tradition and precedent. In fact, his longtime female disciple, Parwati Soepangat, explained to me that Ashin Jinarakkhita was a believer of gender equality. Therefore, he did not hesitate to support the ordination of nuns in Indonesia. Furthermore, given Ashin Jinarakkhita's background in Mahāyāna, he considered bhikṣuṇī ordination as a

[148] The Maha Sangha Indonesia was renamed Sangha Indonesia in 1972, and again renamed Supreme Sangha Indonesia (Sangha Agung Indonesia, also known as SAGIN) in 1974. See *Perkumpulan Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia*, 17.
[149] See, for instance, Tessa J. Bartholomeusz, *Women under the Bo Tree: Buddhist Nuns in Sri Lanka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Emma Tomalin, "The Thai Bhikkhuni Movement and Women's Empowerment," *Gender & Development* 14, 3 (November 2006): 385-397; Hiroko Kawanami, "The Bhikkhunī Ordination Debate: Global Aspirations, Local Concerns, with Special Emphasis on the Views of the Monastic Community in Burma," *Buddhist Studies Review* 24, 2 (2007): 226-244.

mainstream practice in the Chinese Buddhist world.[150]

In 1963, Ashin Jinarakkhita ordained his female disciple as a novice nun (*śrāmaṇerī*/*shamini* 沙彌尼) at Vihāra Vimala Dharma in Bandung, West Java. He gave her the Pāli name, Jinakumari (1913-1995), and the Chinese Dharma name Wan Thong.[151] Subsequently, he ordained several more women as novice nuns, including Jinavimala (Wan Cheng), Jinaphala (Wan Sian), Jinadasa (Wan Sun), Jinamaitri (Wan Khing), Jinaloka (Wan Hui), Jinakaruna (Wan Sem), Jinapadma (Wan Lian), and Wan Yung.[152] In 1966, Ashin Jinarakkhita sent Jinakumari and several novice nuns to attend the Mahāyāna bhikṣuṇī ordination at the Po Lin Monastery (*Baolian chansi* 寶蓮禪寺) in Hong Kong.[153] After receiving her higher ordination, Bhikṣuṇī Jinakumari returned to Indonesia to assist her master with Dharma propagation and temple building activities. Ashin Jinarakkhita appointed Jinakumari as the head of the bhikṣuṇī community in the Maha Sangha Indonesia. He entrusted Jinakumari with many important tasks in the expansion of the Buddhayāna temples. According to

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[150] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015; See also Parwati Soepangat, *Pengabdian dalam Buddhadharma* (Bandung: Team Penyusun Vihara Vimala Dharma, 2002), chapter 11.

[151] There is little information on the early life of Jinakumari. According to Medya Silvita, Jinakumari was born in 1913 Medan, North Sumatra, and died in 1995. The names of her lineage masters were Yuen Chie, San He, Yen Cue, Thung Chan, Pen Ching, and Ti Chen (Ashin Jinarakkhita). See Medya Silvita, "Jinakumari: Indonesia's First Nun," in *Compassion & Social Justice*, ed. Karma Lekshe Tsomo (Yogyakarta: Sakyadhita, 2015), 7.

[152] Unfortunately, I was unable to track down the Chinese characters of their Dharma names. Silvita, "Jinakumari," 9.

[153] Following the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, the Communist authorities suspended Buddhist ordination ceremony in China. Therefore, Buddhist novices went to Hong Kong or Taiwan to receive their high ordination in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition.

Medya Silvita, Jinakumari took on the administrative role of overseeing the purchase of land, as well as the construction and renovation of monasteries. Additionally, Jinakumari played an active role in spreading the Dharma to women through the use of stories and methods such as vegetarian meal cooking.[154]

By the mid-1960s, Ashin Jinarakkhita had built a vibrant Buddhist community in Indonesia. He founded a new Buddhist movement that shifted the image of Buddhism as a Chinese religion to a multi-ethnic religion—for both Chinese and indigenous people—in the modern nation-state. His Buddhayāna movement, which emphasized the coexistence and co-practice of diverse Buddhist doctrines and scriptures leading to a single enlightened path, were strategically juxtaposed with the Indonesia nation motto of "Unity in Diversity." As his movement continued to expand, Ashin Jinarakkhita founded a lay Buddhist organization to organize his members and to train lay preachers to help him proselytize in various parts of Indonesia. Later, he organized ordination ceremonies to ordain men and women as monastics. With the establishment of a Sangha community, Ashin Jinarakkhita was able to consolidate the movement and his leadership of it. In the years to follow, we will see how the broader context of socio-political change and conflict in Indonesia shaped the development of Buddhism in general, and the Buddhayāna movement in particular.

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[154] Silvita, "Jinakumari," 7-8.

Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha and Indonesia's New Order

On October 1, 1965, the so-called Thirtieth of September Movement (*Gerakan 30 September*, G30S) allegedly murdered six generals of the Indonesian army and attempted to preempt a coup. General Suharto (1921-2008) quickly crushed the G30S Movement and blamed the Communist Party of Indonesia (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI) for instigating the violence. He used anti-communism as a pretext to hijack President Sukarno's powers and installed himself as second president of the Indonesia Republic. In the months to follow, Suharto killed and imprisoned thousands of alleged communists, and banned the PKI.[155] In 1967, Suharto became president, and ushered in thirty-one years of authoritarian rule known as the New Order (*Orde Baru*) that lasted until his resignation in 1998. The New Order regime focused mainly on economic development and maintained a repressive approach towards left-wing views and political dissent.[156]

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[155] The 1965 coup and the subsequent mass killing of alleged communists have been the subject of recent discussions by scholars and social activists. See, for instance, Robert Cribb and Charles A. Coppel, "A Genocide that Never Was: Explaining the Myth of Anti-Chinese Massacres in Indonesia, 1965–66," *Journal of Genocide Research* 11, 4 (2009): 447-465; Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor, eds., *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-68* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012); John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'état in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); John Roosa, "The State of Knowledge about an Open Secret: Indonesia's Mass Disappearances of 1965-66," *Journal of Asian Studies* 75, 2 (May 2016): 281-297. Joshua Oppenheimer produced two documentaries, *The Act of Killing* (2012) and *The Look of Silence* (2014), to expose the Indonesian massacre of 1965-66.

[156] For further reading on the New Order period, see, for example, Jörgen Hellman, *Performing the Nation: Cultural Politics in New Order Indonesia* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2003); Virginia Matheson Hooker, *Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993); Frans Hüsken, Mario Rutten, and

The Suharto government blamed Communist China for the G30S Movement and for their influence over the PKI. Subsequently, the authoritarian regime severed diplomatic ties with the People's Republic in 1967 and only restored relations in 1990.[157] Suharto's New Order government was suspicious of Chinese Indonesians' ties to Communist China and their possible involvement with the PKI. Therefore, Suharto introduced an ethnic policy to assimilate the Chinese Indonesians to make them loyal citizens of the Indonesian nation. His government promulgated a series of laws and presidential orders to assimilation (*pribumization*) of Chinese Indonesians, including the adoption of Indonesian-sounding names (1966),[158] a ban on the public display of Chinese religion, beliefs and customs, as well as the use of Chinese languages and characters (1967),[159] and the elimination of the "three pillars" of Chinese culture, namely Chinese media (1965), Chinese political and social organizations, as well as Chinese schools (1966). As Chinese Indonesian scholar Leo

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Jan-Paul Dirkse, eds., *Indonesia di bawah Orde Baru: Pembangunan dan Kesejahteraan Sosial* (Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 1997); James T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[157] Taomo Zhou's recent study reveals that China's influence over the PKI and its involvement in the G30S Movement was far more limited than what the Suharto regime have previously claimed. See Taomo Zhou, "China and the Thirtieth of September Movement," *Indonesia* 98 (October 2014): 29-58.

[158] Keputusan Presidium Kabinet (Cabinet Presidium Decision) No. 127/U/Kep/12/1966.

[159] Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia (Presidential Instruction) Nomor 14 Tahun 1967.

Suryadinata suggests, "the objective of the policy was that through assimilation, the entire ethnic Chinese community as a separate community would disappear."[160]

In 1965, prior to the coup attempt, then President Sukarno passed a Presidential Determination on "Prevention of Misuse and/or Defamation of Religion" (*Pencegahan Penyalah-Gunaan dan/atau Penodaan Agama*) to highlight the fundamental principle of "Belief in the one Almighty God" (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*) in the Pancasila, the first of five philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state.[161] It also guaranteed the protection of six officially recognized religions, namely, Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.[162] After Suharto became Indonesia' president, he saw religion as a useful tool for his anti-communist endeavor. The Suharto government emphasized the Pancasila principle of "Belief in the one Almighty God" and considered religion as a force that could be harness to counter the atheist PKI. Therefore, the regime required all Indonesian citizens to have a religion, which had to be stated in their resident identity card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*). Indonesian citizens who did not have any

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[160] Leo Suryadinata, *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), 266.

[161] The five principles of the Pancasila are: 1) Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa; 2) Kemanusiaan Yang Adil dan Beradab; 3)Persatuan Indonesia; 4) Kerakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan, Dalam Permusyawaratan Perwakilan; and 5) Keadilan Sosial Bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia). There are several translations for the concept of "Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa." I would translate it as "Belief in the one Almighty God." For further reading on the Pancasila, see Eka Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society: A Cultural and Ethical Analysis* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).

[162] Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia (Presidential Determination) Nomor 1 Tahun 1965.

religion were required to have one, or risk persecution as a sympathizer of the banned PKI.[163] Suharto generally maintained a tolerant attitude towards the Buddhist minority during his presidency. For example, in his 1969 Vesak speech to Indonesia's Buddhist community, Suharto encouraged Buddhists to contribute to the developmental policy of the New Order government:

> One of the main causes of the physical and mental suffering so far borne by the majority of our people, lies in under-development and poverty. Therefore, to combat under-development and poverty, to liberate ourselves from sufferings, there is no other choice for us but to implement this Five-Year Development Plan, to open the way towards the building up of a society that is happy, physically and spiritually, and based on Pantja Sila.[164]

> I have repeatedly stated that all groups in the society have an equal right and obligation to take part and play an active role in the implementation of the Five-Year Development Plan. You, Indonesian Buddhists also shoulder this right and obligation. That is the reason why at this commemoration of Vaicak Day, I encourage the Indonesian

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[163] Suryadinata, *Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, 161-162.

[164] During the New Order period, Suharto's government completed six Five-Year Development Plan between 1969/70 and 1993/94. See Aris Ananta, Muljana Soekarni, and Sjamsui Arifin, "Economic Challenges in a New Era," in *The Indonesian Economy: Entering a New Era*, eds. Aris Ananta, Muljana Soekarni, and Sjamsui Arifin (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011), 5.

> Buddhists to walk on with determination on the Noble Eightfold Path, as a means to liberate themselves and mankind from sufferings and misery.[165]

Nevertheless, Suharto's assimilation policy had a profound impact on Indonesia's Buddhist community and the Chinese Indonesian population in general. First, the requirement for Indonesian citizens to declare their religion caused some Chinese Indonesians who did not have a formal religion to state either Buddhism or Confucianism as their religion. According to Venerable Dharmavimala, as Taoism was not one of the recognized religions, many Chinese who worshipped at Chinese temples declared Buddhism as their religion out of convenience. These new "converts," which knew little or nothing about Buddhist teachings, contributed to an increase in the number of Buddhists in Indonesia.[166] The 1971 Population Census of Indonesia estimated that there were 1,092,314 Buddhists in Indonesia, which made up 0.92% of the population.[167] As there was no population census regarding the number of Chinese in Indonesia prior to the publication of the Population Census of 2000, Leo Suryadinata relied on several collaborating evidence to speculate that the majority of Buddhists were ethnic Chinese, as the number of Buddhists happens to coincide with his estimated size of the ethnic Chinese population.[168]

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[165] *Buddhism in Indonesia* (Djakarta: P.N. Pertjetakan Negara R.I., 1969), 6.
[166] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[167] Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 104.
[168] Suryadinata, *Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia*, 296-297.

Second, the 1966 regulation on name changing and the 1967 regulation on the public display of Chinese religion, beliefs and customs had an immediate impact on the Buddhist community. The Chinese names of Buddhist temples had to be changed to Pāli or Sanskrit names to appear assimilated into Indonesian society. For instance, Kong Hoa Sie changed its name to Vihāra Vaipulya Sasana to avoid breaking the law. Furthermore, following a ban on all Chinese events in public, Buddhist temples could no longer organize religious ceremonies for Chinese festivals, such as the Lunar New Year (*Tahun Baru Imlek*), the Hungry Ghost Festival (*Festival Cioko*), and the Mid-Autumn Festival (*Festival Musim Gugur*). Additionally, Chinese Buddhists could no longer use Chinese languages and characters in their liturgy. As a result, Mahāyāna scriptures and mantras in Chinese characters were transliterated into Roman alphabet. The Buddhayāna organizations used Pāli-language texts together with a selection of transliterated Chinese Buddhist texts for their religious activities.[169] Despite these restrictions, Parwati Soepangat shared with me that the Chinese assimilation policy had little negative impact on the Buddhayāna movement. She attributed it to Ashin Jinarakkhita's foresight in "indigenizing Buddhism" and converting non-Chinese such as herself. Moreover, Ashin Jinarakkhita sustained a cordial relationship with the Suharto regime, and even met with President Suharto on a couple of occasions.[170] Hence, there was no surprise that the state considered Ashin Jinarakkhita as the main representative for the Buddhist community in Indonesia.

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[169] Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015; Michael Ananda, interview by author, Jakarta, February 9, 2015; Bechert, "The Buddhayāna of Indonesia," 15.

[170] Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.

Figure 4.7: Ashin Jinarakkhita meets President Suharto at the Merdeka Palace, 1992. Photo Courtesy of Edij Juangari.

Although Parwati Soepangat rightly pointed out that the Buddhayāna movement maintained pleasant working relations with the Indonesian government during the New Order, Ashin Jinarakkhita nonetheless had to make a major and controversial doctrinal adjustment to ensure the survival of Buddhism. As pointed out earlier, the Suharto government emphasized the Pancasila principle of "Belief in the one Almighty God" and used religion as a tool to counter Communism. Buddhism, however, is a non-theistic religion and does not have a monotheistic creator God. To

make Buddhism in line with the first principle of the Pancasila, Ashin Jinarakkhita introduced the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha—which I will translate as "The God Primordial Buddha"—as the Buddhist version of an Almighty God (*Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*).[171] The monk strategically claimed that the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha could be found in the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, a tenth century text produced during the reign of King Mpu Sindok from East Java.[172]

In his unpublished manuscript, Hudaya Kandahjaya highlights that the term Ādi-Buddha could be found in several early Javanese sources. He points out that Ādi-Buddha was first mentioned in the Kawi-language *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*: "The Ādi-Buddha mind born in the cakrawarti king after defeating the powerful enemy is able to fulfill all wishes of all beings, hence such a mind is called the Mahāmuniwara Cintāmaṇi-samādhi."[173] The term Ādi-Buddha again appeared in the Pagaruyung I (Bukit Gombak I) inscription dated to April 13, 1356. The inscription mentions that

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[171] According to Damien Keown, Ādi-Buddha refers to the "primordial Buddha." This term was only "found in late Mahāyāna and Tibetan traditions of tantric Buddhism, possibly not attested in Indian Buddhism but generated through hyper-Sanskritization." The Ādi-Buddha is usually identified as the Samantabhadra Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism. It is believed that both nirvāṇa and saṃsāra arise from his nature. See Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, 5; Several scholars have examined the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha, see, for example, Bechert, "The Buddhayāna of Indonesia," 10-21; Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism," 108-117; Ekowati, "Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita's Interpreting and Translating Buddhism," 36-45; Kandahjaya, "Ashin Jinarakkhita and Adi Buddha," unpublished manuscript.

[172] The *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* originally written in the Kawi language had been translated into several languages. In 1910, J. Kats published a Dutch translation of the text. Balinese scholar I Gusti Sugriwa published an Indonesian language translation in 1956. See *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, trans., J. Kats (The Hague, 1910); *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, trans. I Gusti Sugriwa (Denpasar: Pustaka Balimas, 1956).

[173] J. Kats, trans., *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan,* folio 50a; quoted in Kandahjaya, "Ashin Jinarakkhita and Adi Buddha," 16.

King Adityawarman of Malayapura, a state in central Sumatra, was "exceedingly like Ādi-Buddha." He was said to possess the virtues of "loving kindness, compassion, joy, and tranquility," and was "a king beneficial to misfortunate living beings." Similar term also appeared in an old Javanese text, *Praṇamya satataṃ Buddham*.[174] Taken together, it was clear that Ashin Jinarakkhita relied on historical claims to justify that Buddhism—and the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha—had long been a part of Indonesia's history.

Following Ashin Jinarakkhita's "rediscovery" of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha from old Javanese texts, he mobilized his disciples from various parts of Indonesia to spread this idea. Among his followers who contributed to the research and promotion of the Ādi-Buddha concept were Girirakkhito, Dhammaviriya from Bogor, Dicky Soemani and Karbono from Bandung, Widyadharma from Jakarta, as well as many lay preachers from the PUUI.[175] In 1965, Dhammaviriya published a small book entitled *The God in Buddhism* (*Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha*). In the book, he illustrates the Buddhayāna tenets of Indonesian Buddhism:

1. The One Supreme God is Ādi-Buddha
2. The Prophets are Buddha Gotama and the Bodhisattvas

[174] Kandahjaya, "Ashin Jinarakkhita and Adi Buddha," 16-17.
[175] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 185.

3. The Holy Books are: i) Tripiṭaka; ii) Dhammapada; and iii) *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*[176]

Dhammaviriya presents Buddhism in the monotheistic Abrahamic religious context to validate that the religion fulfills the Pancasila principle of "Belief in the one Almighty God":

1. The God who is without feature or characteristic is Sang Ādi-Buddha.
2. The definable God who created the Universe is Avalokiteśvara
3. The God who is close to mankind is Padmapani[177]

The book also uses the Mahāyāna doctrine of the Three Bodies (*Trikāya; sansheng* 三身) of the Buddha[178] to explain the concept of "God Almighty" in the Buddhist context:

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[176] Dhammaviriya, *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha* (Bogor: PUUI, 1965), 4; quoted in Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism," 113.
[177] Dhammaviriya, *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha*, 5; quoted in Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism," 113.
[178] The three bodies (*Trikāya*) of the Buddha are: *dharmakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya*. The *dharmakāya* (*fasheng* 法身) refers to the transcendence of form and realization of true enlightenment. The *saṃbhogakāya* (*baoshen* 報身) is the Buddha-body that is called "reward body" or "body of enjoyment of the merits attained as a bodhisattva." The *nirmāṇakāya* (*huashen* 化身 or *yingshen* 應身) is the body manifested in response to the need to teach sentient beings. For a study of the *trikāya* theory, see Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikāya Theory* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).

1. Ādi-Buddha symbolized *dharmakāya*, who caused the creation of the universe
2. Avalokiteśvara symbolized *saṃbhogakāya*, who created the universe
3. Padmapani symbolized *nirmāṇakāya*, that is Avalokiteśvara on earth.[179]

Iem Brown noted that the devotional salutation "Namo Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddhaya" (Homage to the God Primordial Buddha) was not mentioned in Dhammaviriya's book.[180] In 1972, a subsequent book with the same title *The God in Buddhism* (*Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha*) compiled by Ashin Jinarakkhita's disciple, Upi Dhammavadi, began with the devotional salutation "Namo Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddhaya." This devotional salutation was to be recited before the usual Pāli salutation "Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa" (Homage to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the Fully-Enlightened One).[181] Buddhologist Heinz Bechert called the Buddhayāna movement "a syncretistic form of Theravāda," and observed an interesting mix of "Namo Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddhaya" with Theravāda and Mahāyāna salutation in Buddhayāna's liturgical texts produced during the New Order:

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[179] Dhammaviriya, *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha*, 5; quoted in Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism," 113.
[180] Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism," 113.
[181] Dhammavadi, comp. *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha* (Patjet: Buddharasmi, Vihara Nagasena, 1972); quoted in Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism," 113.

Namo sanghyang Ādibuddhāya

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

Namo Amitābha Buddhāya

Namo Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva

Namo Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva

Namo Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva

Namo Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva

Namo Kuvera Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva

Namo Bhaiṣajyaguru Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva[182]

Namo Sabbe Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva[183]

Ashin Jinarakkhita's endeavor to make Buddhism aligned with the first principle of the Pancasila was accepted by the Suharto government. The authorities acknowledged Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the "One and only God" of Buddhism. On June 23, 1975, the Indonesian government promulgated the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 21 (*Sang Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia* Nomor 21) to officially recognize the Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the God of Indonesian Buddhism and authorize Buddhist civil servants to recite the term in their official oath taking ceremony.[184] The Government Regulation stated that:

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[182] It is interesting to note that Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha of Healing (*Yaoshi fo* 藥師佛), was rendered as a Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva.
[183] *Ringkasan Pancaran Bahagia Paritta Mantram*; quoted in Bechert, "The Buddhayāna of Indonesia," 15.
[184] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 202.

Article 3

(1) If a Civil Servant objects to taking an oath because of his beliefs about religion/ belief in God Almighty (*Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*) then he will make a vow.

(2) In the case referred to in paragraph (1), the phrase "In God's name, I swear/ vow" (*Demi Allah, saya bersumpah/ berjanji*) mentioned in Article 2 is replaced with the phrase: "In God Almighty, I swear and vow earnestly" (*Demi Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, saya menyatakan dan berjanji dengan sungguh-sungguh*)

(3) For those who are Christians, at the end of the oath/ pledge, [they may] add a sentence which reads: "May God help me" (*Kiranya Tuhan menolong saya*).

(4) For those who are Hindus, the words "In God's name" (*Demi Allah*) in Article 2, is replaced by "Om Atah Paramawisesa."

(5) For those who are Buddhists, the words "In God's name" in Article 2 is replaced by "In Sang Hyang Adi Budha."

> (6) For those who belief in God Almighty religion other than Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, the words "In God's name" in Article 2 is replaced with other words in accordance with his faith in God Almighty.[185]

In 1979, the Buddhayāna movement published a booklet entitled *The Doctrine of God Almighty Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha in Indonesian Buddhism* (*Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dalam Agama Buddha Indonesia*). The book begins with a preface with a devotional salutation and an explanation of the rationale for publishing this text:

> Namo Sanghyang Adi Buddhaya,
> Namo Buddhaya – Bodhisatwanya – Mahasatwanya.
>
> To meet the needs of Indonesian Buddhists for scriptural guidelines that match the identity of the Indonesian nation based on the Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the sacred heritage of the Borobudur, we present *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha* with the hope that [this booklet] can be used as a means of support and stabilize the teachings of Indonesian Buddhism throughout the Indonesian Motherland (*Ibu Pertiwi*).

[185] Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia (Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia) Nomor 21 Tahun 1975.

> We humbly look forward to suggestions for improvement of this booklet for it to become more qualified and perfect.
>
> Mettacittena,
>
> "Buddhayana" Organization (*Yayasan Buddhayana*)[186]

This widely circulated booklet presents the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha found in ancient Javanese texts to suggest that the belief in God Almighty had been a Buddhist practice in Indonesia since historical times.[187] It lists the three categories of Buddhist scriptures—three baskets of the Pāli Canon, thirty-two Sanskrit scriptures, and four Kawi texts—that are considered sacred texts of Indonesian Buddhism (see Appendix 5).[188] Additionally, the booklet discusses how Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha can be understood using the Mahāyāna doctrine of the "Three Bodies." However, unlike the earlier book by Dhammaviriya, *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha* offers a different understanding based on esoteric Buddhist ideas. It suggests that Ādi-Buddha is the *dharmakāya* as represented by Vajradhara; Dhyāni Buddha is the *saṃbhogakāya* characterized by the Vajrasattva; and Dhyāni Bodhisattva is the

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[186] "Kata Pengantar," in *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dalam Agama Buddha Indonesia*, 3rd ed. (Jakarta Barat: Yayasan "Buddhayana", 1982).
[187] "Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha Tuhan Yang Maha Esa Dalam Agama Buddha Indonesia," in *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha*, 1-4.
[188] "Kitab-Kitab Suci Agama Buddha Indonesia," in *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha*, 6-7.

nirmāṇakāya embodied by Vajrapani.[189] This explanation gave rise to a Buddhist Holy Trinity unique to Buddhayāna's interpretation of Indonesian Buddhism and was fitting to the first principle of the Pancasila.

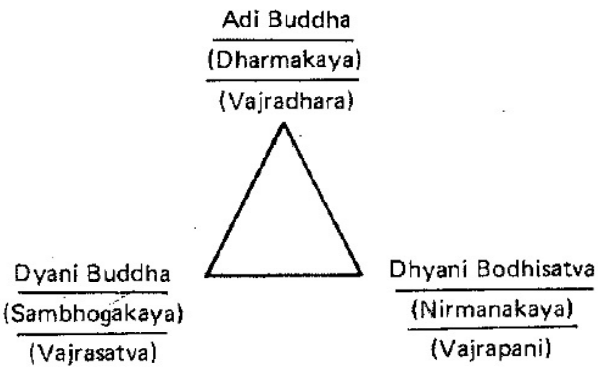

Figure 4.8: Buddhayāna's New Interpretation of the Three Bodies of the Buddha

Source: *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha*, 14

In his 1981 article, Buddhologist Heinz Bechert observed that Buddhayāna's new form of Buddhism was attractive for Buddhists in Indonesia, especially among the Chinese Indonesians. This was because Chinese Indonesian Buddhist could "adopt a form of Buddhism which declared itself to be genuinely Indonesian" and "retain many of the traditions and practices of Chinese Mahāyāna."[190] Likewise, my respondents shared with me that the Javanese Buddhists were delighted with the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha and its reference to ancient Javanese texts. They

[189] *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha*, 14.
[190] Bechert, "The Buddhayāna of Indonesia," 15.

regarded that as Ashin Jinarakkhita's successful effort to create an Indonesianized Buddhism for the Indonesian nation.[191]

Although Ashin Jinarakkhita's controversial concept of the Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha was approved by the Suharto regime and accepted by followers of the Buddhayāna movement, it was met with criticism from Theravāda monastics, which eventually led to the schism of the Sangha in Indonesia. One of his critics was senior Sri Lankan monk Narada Mahathera. Narada could not accept Ashin Jinarakkhita's concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha and his ideas of "Theistic Buddhism." Narada knew Parwati Soepangat since his early missionary trips to Indonesia, where the latter served as his translator, and they stayed in touch over letters. In a letter to Parwati Soepangat, Narada was very critical of Ashin Jinarakkhita's "Theistic Buddhism" and wrote: "Please, tell your teacher that there is no God in Buddhism."[192] However, Ashin Jinarakkhita's disciples defended their teacher's effort to safeguard the survival of Buddhism under the Suharto regime. As Ashin Jinarakkhita's biographer Edij Juangari argues, Narada misunderstood Ashin Jinarakkhita's concept of "God Almighty" because he thought that Ashin Jinarakkhita was equating Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha with the Western concept of "God." He points out that Ashin Jinarakkhita's ideas were based on a combination of Buddhist teachings and ancient Indonesian beliefs. This misunderstanding, as he suggests, was attributed to the fact that Narada

[191] Dharmasurya Bhumi, interview by author, Bandung, March 5, 2015; Parwati Soepangat, interview by author, Jakarta, March 23, 2015.
[192] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 144-145.

was not born and raised in Indonesia, and also his ignorance of the socio-political situation that Indonesian Buddhists were facing during the New Order.[193]

However, Ashin Jinarakkhita's idea of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha also faced opposition within the ranks of the Maha Sangha Indonesia, the very Sangha organization that he founded. Five of the Theravāda monastic members, namely, Girirakkhito, Jinapiya, Jinaratana, Subhato, and Sumangalo thought that Ashin Jinarakkhita was deviating away from the authentic teachings of the Buddha-dharma. Girirakkhito who initially supported Ashin Jinarakkhita's idea decided to turn against him. The five monks resolved to leave Maha Sangha Indonesia to propagate the teachings of "pure" Theravāda Buddhism. On January 12, 1972, they submitted a letter to secede from the Maha Sangha Indonesia and declared the establishment of Sangha Indonesia. A handful of Buddhist monastics and laity who opposed Ashin Jinarakkhita welcomed the establishment of a new Sangha organization and switched their allegiance to the new group. The Sangha Indonesia actively propagated the teachings of Theravāda Buddhism, and criticized Ashin Jinarakkhita's idea of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha, asserting that the doctrine was not orthodox Buddhist teaching, but a concoction of local custom and tradition.[194]

The schism of the Sangha was further complicated by the interference of the government. In 1974, Gde Pudja, MA, the director of Guidance of Hinduism and

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[193] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 145; Edij Juangari, interview by author, Jakarta, January 27, 2015.
[194] Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma*, 195-197.

Buddhism (*Bimas Hindu dan Buddha*) in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, ordered the merger of Ashin Jinarakkhita's Maha Sangha Indonesia and the recently established Sangha Indonesia to form Supreme Sangha Indonesia (Sangha Agung Indonesia, thereafter SAGIN). Ashin Jinarakkhita was appointed as the chief of SAGIN with Jinapiya, Girirakkhito, and Uggadhammo as his deputies. This awkward arrangement was short-lived; the founding members of Sangha Indonesia were unwilling to accept Ashin Jinarakkhita's leadership and his concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha. In 1976, several Theravāda Buddhist monks resigned from SAGIN to form the Sangha Theravāda Indonesia.[195] Two years later, Venerable Dharmasagaro (Dinghai 定海), an Chinese Indonesian monk first ordained under Ashin Jinarakkhita and received his Mahāyāna ordination in Hong Kong, also decided to leave SAGIN. Dharmasagaro along with eleven Chinese Indonesian monks and nuns co-founded the Sangha Mahāyāna Indonesia (*Yinni dacheng sengqie hui* 印尼大乘僧伽會). According to Bunki Kimura, Sangha Mahāyāna Indonesia also declared their belief in the Buddha as "God." However, the Sangha organization focused on removing the folk religious elements from Chinese worship and adopted a more "radical" stance than SAGIN.[196]

The second half of the 1970s saw a burgeoning of Buddhist organizations in Indonesia. The Suharto government again saw the need to conglomerate the various organizations into a federation for the Indonesian Buddhist community. In May 1978,

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[195] Ibid., 202-203.
[196] Kimura, "Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism." 65-66.

a Buddhist congress was held in Yogyakarta to form the Representatives of Indonesian Buddhists (Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia, thereafter WALUBI). At its establishment, WALUBI became the umbrella association of three Sangha organizations, namely Sangha Theravāda Indonesia, Sangha Mahāyāna Indonesia, and SAGIN, and seven lay Buddhist organizations, namely Majelis Agama Buddha Nichiren Syosyu Indonesia, Majelis Buddha Mahāyāna Indonesia, Majelis Dharma Duta Kasogatan, Majelis Pandita Buddha Dhamma Indonesia, Majelis Pandita Buddha Maitreya Indonesia, Majelis Rokhaniwan Tridharma Seluruh Indonesia, and Majelis Buddhayāna Indonesia (MBI).[197] In 1982, the first president of WALUBI, Suparto HS, suddenly passed away and was succeeded by Javanese army general Soemantri. Following the WALUBI congress in 1986 that was attended by President Suharto, Ashin Jinarakkhita's "nemesis" Girirakkhito was elected the new president (1986-1991), and was again elected for a second term (1992-1996).[198]

The differences and tension between Ashin Jinarakkhita's Buddhayāna movement and Girirakkhito's Theravāda purist faction existed for more than a decade. However, it was only in 1995 that WALUBI expelled Ashin Jinarakkhita's SAGIN and MBI from the Buddhist federation. Leo Suryadinata suggests that the split could be attributed to both "doctrinal struggle" and "personality conflicts" between the two factions. Furthermore, there were some members who considered Ashin Jinarakkhita's faction as a threat to the leadership. Suryadinata notes that the then Director of the

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[197] *Perkembangan Agama Buddha di Indonesia* (Jakarta Barat: Penerbit Dian Dharma, 2007),
[198] Suryadinata, *Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, 181.

Buddhist section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs sided with the WALUBI leaders. To lessen the tensions between the Ashin Jinarakkhita's faction and Girirakkhito's, President Suharto requested the two conflicting factions to reconcile at the 1995 Vesak celebration. However, Suharto, along with Vice-President Try Sutrino and Armed Forces Commander General Feisal Tanjung attended the Vesak celebration organized by WALUBI in 1996, thus revealing that government favored WALUBI nearing the end of the New Order.[199] With the end of the Cold War in 1991, the Suharto government probably no longer considered Communism as an immediate threat to Indonesia. While Ashin Jinarakkhita and his Buddhayāna movement remained influential in Indonesia, the authorities probably saw his concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha less significant in the post-Cold War era.

Following the fall of Suharto and the anti-Chinese riots in May 1998, Indonesia went through a process of reformation (*reformasi*) and democratization. The post-Suharto era saw an increase in democratic space and the lifting of Chinese assimilation legislations. This gave rise to the revival of Chinese culture, language, media, and religion. Setefanus Suprajitno, for instance, observed a resurgence of Chinese festival celebrations and religious rites at Chinese Buddhist temples in many parts of Indonesia.[200] The Buddhayāna organizations also revived their Chinese celebrations and religious activities. Additionally, Ashin Jinarakkhita's disciples reconnected with their lineage ancestral temple, Guanghua Monastery, in Fujian,

[199] Ibid., 183-184.
[200] Setefanus Suprajitno, "Negotiating the Cultural and the Religious: The Recasting of the Chinese Indonesian Buddhist," *Biblioasia* 7, 3 (2011): 24-30.

China.[201] Despite the Chinese revival and more relaxed political environment, Ashin Jinarakkhita retained the doctrine of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the foundation of the Buddhayāna movement. When I visited Buddhayāna temples during my fieldwork between 2013 and 2015, I noticed that Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha remains present in liturgical texts and ritual practices. Ashin Jinarakkhita might be gone but his ideas remain in present-day Indonesia. Future research on the Buddhayāna movement in post-Suharto Indonesia would be able to shed more light on Ashin Jinarakkhita's legacy in Indonesia's Buddhism.

Conclusion

A brochure I collected from my visit to the Indonesian Buddhayāna Council in 2015 states that there are 512 Buddhayāna temples distributed all over 25 provinces in Indonesia. While 35% of the temples are located in the cities, 65% are located in villages and rural areas. The Indonesian Buddhayāna Council has board of committees in 25 provinces and 180 board of committees in cities all over the Indonesian archipelago.[202] The large number of temples and extensive networks of the Buddhayāna movement in Indonesia were evidence of the movement's influence and reach more than a decade after the demise of their founder.

[201] Dharmavimala Thera, interview by author, Jakarta, January 24, 2015.
[202] *Buddhayāna* (Jakarta Barat: Indonesia Buddhayana Council, undated), no pagination.

If one is to understand the history of Buddhism in modern Indonesia, one would have to agree that Ashin Jinarakkhita was a pivotal figure in the dissemination and reconfiguration of the Buddhist faith in the Muslim majority state. During the first decade and a half of Ashin Jinarakkhita's religious career, between his return from the Netherlands and the 1965 Coup, the relatively free religious environment created by the country's constitution allowed him to propagate Buddhism in various parts of Indonesia. He developed three strategies to spread Buddhism. First, Ashin Jinarakkhita sought to indigenize Buddhism by relying on claims of ancient Buddhist kingdoms to legitimize the native status of Buddhism in postcolonial Indonesia. He drew on the history of Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms, and held Vesak Celebrations at the ancient Borobudur to prove his point. Second, he embarked on nation-wide Dharma tours to convert both ethnic Chinese and native Indonesians. He was especially interested to reach out to non-Chinese to show that Buddhism was not only a religion for the Chinese Indonesian minority. Third, and most importantly, Ashin Jinarakkhita established his Buddhayāna movement, which he claimed, was compatible with the Indonesian motto of "Unity in Diversity." His Buddhayāna movement, which embraced diverse Buddhist denominations and doctrines, emphasized the need to propagate an Indonesian Buddhism that embraced diversity and promoted unity. Ashin Jinarakkhita founded a Sangha and a lay organization to help him spread his message.

Following the 1965 Coup and Suharto's rise to power, Suharto's anti-communist authoritarian regime promulgated legislation to assimilate the Chinese Indonesian population and sought to use religion as a tool to counter communism in

the nation. Ashin Jinarakkhita was quick to adjust his strategies to ensure the survival of Buddhism during the New Order period. Ashin Jinarakkhita continued to make Buddhism less Chinese and more indigenous to defend the survival of the religion during the New Order. More significantly, and controversially, he introduced the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the Buddhist version of "God Almighty" to make Buddhism compatible with the Pancasila principle of "Belief in the one Almighty God." Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha was a double-edged sword for Ashin Jinarakkhita and his Buddhayāna movement. On the one hand, the contentious concept was accepted by the Suharto government, thus ensuring that Buddhism remains one of the recognized religions in Indonesia. On the other hand, some of Ashin Jinarakkhita's followers became critical of his "theistic" explanation of Buddhism and broke away from the Buddhayāna movement.

As the first Indonesian born Buddhist monk, Ashin Jinarakkhita faced important and sometimes difficult choices about how, and for whom, to teach the Buddhist doctrines in a postcolonial Muslim majority state. Unlike Chuk Mor and Yen Pei in the previous chapters, Ashin Jinarakkhita was a peranakan Chinese who was born and raised in Indonesia. Scholars have pointed out that peranakan Chinese were willing to operate within "assimilated organizations" and became more "Indonesianized" in order to live and prosper in Indonesia.[203] Therefore, simultaneously with his engagement with the Chinese Indonesian community, Ashin

[203] See Skinner, "The Chinese Minority"; Suryadinata, *Chinese Minority in Indonesia*, chapter 1; Tan, *Etnis Tionghoa di Indonesia*, chapter 7.

Jinarakkhita reached out to non-Chinese Indonesian natives and promoted the controversial concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha to please the Indonesian government. In Ashin Jinarakkhita's ideas of Buddhist modernism, we find a combination of doctrinal innovation and institutional building. His Buddhayāna movement, which sought to create an indigenous Indonesian form of Buddhism for the modern Indonesian nation, was an ingenious strategy to safeguard the survival of Buddhism. In his modernist project, Ashin Jinarakkhita propagated his "inclusive and non-sectarian" Buddhism based a combination of Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhist teachings, ancient Javanese texts, and visions of Indonesian pasts. We find that Ashin Jinarakkhita's pioneering and ambitious projects relied upon not just the Chinese Mahāyāna, but also Burmese, Sri Lanka, and Thai Theravāda networks to build his religious institutions in Indonesia. These different visions coexisted within his Buddhayāna movement. His ideas of Buddhist modernism were motivated less by scriptural concerns than by Indonesian politics and the status of the ethnic Chinese in the country.

CONCLUSION

Dharma in Motion

The main focus of this dissertation is to show how Chinese migration and transnational mobility gave rise to vibrant Buddhist communities in maritime Southeast Asia. As noted in the introduction, there are two main goals to this study. The first concerns the attempt to bridge the study of Southeast Asian Buddhism and the study of Chinese Buddhism. The other explores the role of Chinese diasporic monks in the making of Buddhist modernism in maritime Southeast Asia. In this conclusion, I weave together the threads of each theme.

Southeast Asian Buddhism Reconsidered

Most studies of Buddhism in Southeast Asian history and society are shaped by a teleology leading to the formation of Buddhist majority nation-states. The purpose of the narrative is typically to explain how Theravāda Buddhism, nationalism, and nation-building in mainland Southeast Asia are connected. Consequently, the mainland Theravāda Buddhism—maritime Islam and Catholicism religious divide has become a common theme to conceptualize the religious diversity of Southeast Asia as a region. While this textbook approach serves as a useful frame to discuss the history and culture of Southeast Asian societies, it has caused Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia to be overlooked. This is because Buddhism is a religion of the minority, with the exception of Singapore, in the Muslim majority Malay Archipelago.

As Justin McDaniel has cautioned, we must recognize that Theravādins are not the only Buddhists in Southeast Asia.[1] The central focus of this dissertation then is to question the category of "Southeast Asian Buddhism," and to identify the Mahāyāna Buddhists in the region. We have learned that the majority of Buddhists in maritime Southeast Asia are ethnic Chinese adhering to Mahāyāna Buddhism.

But just as the current literature on Southeast Asian Buddhism says little about Buddhism in the maritime world of Southeast Asia, the burgeoning scholarship on Buddhism in modern China is primarily concerned with the Buddhist modernist movements within China. The scholarship on modern Chinese Buddhism has offered new insights into the doctrinal innovation, intellectual debates, and emergence of new institutions in twentieth-century China. Nonetheless, this "China-centered" perspective neglects the spread of Chinese Buddhism to Southeast Asia and the transnational networks between China and the Chinese diaspora in the Malay Archipelago. Building on Zhang Wenxue's work on the connected history of Buddhism in China and Singapore, we might consider the South China Sea as a zone for transregional religious circulation of people, knowledge and resources other than the already known trade and diplomacy perspectives.[2] Indeed, as Denys Lombard has written, it is possible to consider southern China and Southeast Asia connected by the South China Sea as part of one region, in the same way that Fernand Braudel studied the history of

[1] McDaniel, "Buddhists in Modern Southeast Asia."
[2] Zhang, *Haiqing Zhuandao chansi*.

the Mediterranean.[3] By crossing the artificial spatial frontier between China and Southeast Asia, I bring Chinese Buddhism into the study of Southeast Asian Buddhism and Southeast Asia into the study of Chinese Buddhism.

I coined the term "South China Sea Buddhism" to highlight the connected history of Buddhism in Greater China and maritime Southeast Asia. In Chapter 1, I discussed Chinese migration and the spread of Buddhism to the maritime region of Southeast Asia. When the Chinese immigrants came to Southeast Asia centuries ago, they faced an unfamiliar and uncertain environment. Religion was an important source of their peace and comfort. These immigrants brought their religions to their new residence and contributed to the founding of temples. Early Chinese immigrants practiced a mixture of Buddhism, Confucian, and Taoism, and were more concerned with mundane blessings than Buddhist doctrinal teachings. Although there were resident monks in some of the temples, they were primarily ritual specialists who knew little, if not nothing about the Buddhist scriptures.

One could trace the emergence of institutional Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia to the arrival of several missionary monks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their presence led to the construction of Buddhist monasteries in the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya, and Singapore. The early efforts of these monks were synergized by a handful of pioneering modernist monks in the

[3] Denys Lombard, "Another 'Mediterranean' in Southeast Asia," *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 1 (2007): 3-9.

second half of the twentieth century. Chapters 2-4 present the history of Chinese Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia by following the religious career of three monks, namely, Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Ashin Jinarakkhita. Their ideas of Buddhist modernism, different in their respective ways, have generated new understanding of Buddhist doctrines and practices, fostered transnational religious interactions, established new institutions and religious spaces, and served local purposes. Therefore, it is important to understand that South China Sea Buddhism is not merely an extension of China's Mahāyāna Buddhism, but a localized form of Buddhism that use Mandarin Chinese, Southern Chinese dialects, and Southeast Asian languages in their liturgy and scriptures.

Buddhist Modernism in Context

The concept of Buddhist modernism can offer an analytical lens to understand South China Sea Buddhism. The three monks, Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Ashin Jinarakkhita, are useful case studies to explore the question of Buddhist modernism in postcolonial Asia. My understanding of Buddhist modernism is informed by Anne Hansen's analysis of modernist monks in colonial Cambodia.[4] In the preceding chapters, I demonstrated how these three modernist monks—each a pivotal figure in the Buddhist community of his respective Southeast Asia country—articulated Buddhist ideas which they claimed relevant to the modern life and the modern society. Each of them put in motion their thoughts and ideas, and relied on scriptural teachings

[4] Hansen, *How to Behave*.

and local claims to interpret what modern Buddhism entails, to confront the realities of the modern nation-state.

Chuk Mor's Buddhist modernism was a redefinition of the concept of "being Buddhist" based on Taixu's ideas of Human-life Buddhism. Born and raised in China, he received his religious training at the Minnan Buddhist Institute under the tutelage of Taixu and his associates. He spent several years teaching in Hong Kong and Macau before migrating to Penang in 1954, a Chinese majority Malaysian state in a Muslim majority nation. Chuk Mor noticed that Malaysian Chinese Buddhists practiced a mix of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, and lacked scriptural knowledge; he therefore sought to "convert" them to his modern Buddhism. Drawing on the principles of Human-life Buddhism, Chuk Mor propagated a Chinese Malaysian Buddhist identity that encouraged this-worldly practice of Buddhism based on a particular vision of orthodox, right faith Buddhism, and highlighted the importance of taking refuge in the Triple Gems. Chuk Mor considered education as a means to accomplish his goal. To achieve his ideal of Buddhist modernism, Chuk Mor spearheaded the expansion of the Phor Tay School, founded the Triple Wisdom Hall, and established the Malaysian Buddhist Institute, as new spaces for the dissemination of Buddhist teachings.

Yen Pei too was born and raised in China, and received his religious training at the Minnan Buddhist Institute. While he studied the modernist ideas of Taixu, he was more influenced by Yinshun's ideas of Humanistic Buddhism, which not only

encouraged the incorporation of Buddhist practices into everyday life, but also active engagement with social issues. Following the establishing of the People's Republic in 1949, Yen Pei fled China for Taiwan, where he spent the next decade serving as an abbot of a monastery, teaching Dharma classes, and traveling to various Southeast Asia countries. In 1964, Yen Pei settled in Singapore to propagate his ideas of modern Buddhism. During the first phase of his career in Singapore, where he served as the abbot of Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium between 1964 and 1979, Yen Pei's Buddhist modernism was based on a combination of evangelism and education. Yen Pei built a modern auditorium and pioneered a range of Dharma activities, and relied on his networks to invite traveling monks to lecture at his organization. He also published and circulated his collected works in Singapore and overseas. In the second phase of his career in Singapore from 1980 to his death in 1996, Yen Pei became a social activist and founded the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services. While he remained concerned with Dharma propagation and education, he extended his vision of Buddhist modernism to include public engagement and providing social services. Yen Pei taught that Buddhist doctrines could offer practical solutions to alleviating social concerns such as poverty and aging, organ donation and transplant, as well as drug prevention and rehabilitation.

Unlike Chuk Mor and Yen Pei, Ashin Jinarakkhita was born in a Chinese family in colonial Dutch East Indies. He received secular education in Java and in the Netherlands. He first encountered Buddhism in the Chinese Indonesian temples, and later at the Theosophical Society. Ashin Jinarakkhita then received his novice

ordination in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition in Indonesia, his higher ordination in the Theravāda tradition in Burma, and his Bodhisattva percepts in Taiwan. His vision of Buddhist modernism was inspired by a concoction of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Theravāda Buddhism, as well as Theosophy. He promoted a modern Indonesian Buddhism, which he called the Buddhayāna movement, for the modern Indonesian state. Ashin Jinarakkhita made historical claims of ancient Buddhist kingdoms to legitimize the native status of Buddhism in postcolonial Indonesia, sought indigenous Indonesian converts to present Buddhism as a religion beyond the Chinese Indonesian population, and emphasized that his new Buddhist movement was compatible with the national discourse of "Unity in Diversity." Following Suharto's rise to power in 1967, the New Order government passed laws to assimilate the Chinese Indonesian population and used religion as a political tool to suppress communism in the nation. Ashin Jinarakkhita introduced the controversial concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as the Buddhist version of "God Almighty" to make Buddhism compatible with the Pancasila principle of "Belief in the one Almighty God." His visions of Buddhist modernism, based on a distinctive new institution in line with the modern nation-state, ensured the survival of the religion in the Muslim majority nation.

The three cases present a fascinating study of how Buddhist modernism was shaped by a combination of transnational circulations and local historical circumstances. Returning to Hansen and McMahon's works on Buddhist modernism, my combined attention to transnational processes and national/local historical conditions reveal that modernist visions of Chinese Buddhism demanded scriptural

authority and historical legitimacy but also the contingency of action and monastic intentions. Setting itself in opposition to pre-institutional Chinese Buddhism, Buddhist modernism in maritime Southeast Asia incorporated notions of orthodoxy from ideas of Buddhist reform movements in China and Taiwan, from Theosophy, and from the concerns of the modern nation. If we trace the history of South China Sea Buddhism since the mid-century, we will see the role of Chinese diasporic monks in the articulation of Buddhist modernism in the historical backdrop of Chinese migration, the Cold War, decolonization, and nation-building in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. During maritime Southeast Asia's transition to modern nation-states, these modernist monks played a stabilizing role in a rapidly changing socio-political environment. They embarked on their respective modernist projects and established new institutions to implement their agendas. Closer study of their modernist endeavors could lead us to recognize that local concerns and transnational circulations are both sides of Buddhist modernism.

APPENDIX 1

List of Interviewees

Name	Brief biography	Place and date of interview
1. Michael Ananda	Michael Ananda is nephew of Ashin Jinarakkhita. He was ordained as a monk and studied under Ashin Jinarakkhita for several years. After he disrobed, he served as a lay leader for Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia.	Jakarta, February 9, 2015
2. Dharmasurya Bhumi	Dharmasurya Bhumi is abbot of Vihāra Vimala Dharma. He is a Javanese. He was born in Nganjuk, East Java, and went to college at Airlangga University. In 1973, he became a monk under the tutelage of Ashin Jinarakkhita.	Bandung, March 5, 2015
3. Dharmavimala Thera (Shi Dingjing 釋定淨)	Dharmavimala Thera is deputy abbot of Wihara Ekayāna Arama. An Indonesian Chinese, he was ordained as a monk by Ashin Jinarakkhita in 1992. Later, he received his monastic training at Guanghua Monastery in Putian, China, under the tutelage of Venerable Yuanzhuo.	Jakarta, January 24, 2015
4. Edij Juangari	Edij Juangari is the official biographer of Ashin Jinarakkhita. Born to a Buddhist family in Binji, Sumatra, he first met Ashin Jinarakkhita when he went to college at the Bandung Institute of Technology. Later, he became a lay disciple of Ashin Jinarakkhita and member of Pemuda Vihāra Vimala Dharma.	Jakarta, January 27, 2015.
5. Koh Tsu Koon (Xu Zigen 許子根)	Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon was the Chief Minister of Penang from 1990 to 2008. Born to a Buddhist family in Penang, he became a lay disciple of Venerable	Penang, September 13, 2014

	Chuk Mor at a young age. During his tenure as the Chief Minister of Penang, he recommended Chuk Mor for the title of "Datuk."	
6. Lee Bock Guan (Li Muyuan 李木源)	Lee Bock Guan was the president of Singapore Buddhist Lodge until his untimely death on August 29, 2015. In 1969, he became a lay disciple of Venerable Yen Pei. He was awarded the Public Service Star by the Singapore government in 2009 for his contributions to religious philanthropy.	Singapore, July 18, 2014
7. Seck Kwang Phing (Shi Guangpin 釋廣品)	Venerable Kwang Phing is president of Singapore Buddhist Federation. Born and raised in Singapore, he became a lay Buddhist after graduating from high school. He actively attended Venerable Yen Pei's talks in the 1970s. In 1980, he was ordained as a monk by Venerable Hong Choon.	Singapore, July 6, 2014
8. Shi Chi Chern (Shi Jicheng 釋繼程)	Venerable Chi Chern is principal of the Malaysian Buddhist Institute. Born and raised in Malaysia, he was ordained as a monk by Venerable Chuk Mor in 1978. In 1985, he received Dharma transmission from Venerable Sheng Yen of Dharma Drum Mountain.	Penang, September 29, 2014
9. Shi Chi Chuan (Shi Jichuan 釋繼傳)	Venerable Chi Chuan is abbot of Triple Wisdom Hall. He became a monastic disciple of Venerable Chuk Mor in 1986. In 1997, he succeeded Chuk Mor as the second abbot of Triple Wisdom Hall.	Penang, September 9, 2014
10. Shi Hou Zhong (Shi Houzong 釋厚宗)	Venerable Hou Zhong is religious advisor of Mahaprajna Buddhist Society. Born and raised in Taiwan, he was ordained as a monk by Master Yinshun in 1966. He first met Venerable Yen Pei at the Fuyan He migrated to Singapore in 1982 and	Singapore, August 26, 2014

	founded the Mahaprajna Buddhist Society in 1985.	
11. Shi Weiwu 釋唯悟	Venerable Weiwu is abbot of Than Hsiang Temple and chairman of the Phor Tay School board. He became a lay disciple of Venerable Chuk Mor in the 1960s. He founded the Than Hsiang Temple in Penang in 1990. In 1992, he was ordained as a monk by Venerable Xiujing.	Penang, September 24, 2014
12. Parwati Soepangat	Parwati Soepangat was among one of the first female Javanese disciples of Ashin Jinarakkhita and an important founding member of the Buddhayāna movement. She was the Javanese language translator for Ashin Jinarakkhita in many of his missionary trips. In 1973, she founded the Wanita Buddhis Indonesia. She passed away on July 24, 2016.	Jakarta, March 23, 2015
13. Sudhamek	Sudhamek is chairman of Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia. Born to a Buddhist family, he became a lay disciple of Venerable Chuk Mor at a young age. Sudhamek is a businessman and is currently Chief Executive Officer of the GarudaFood Group.	Jakarta, February 9, 2015

APPENDIX 2

Complete Works from the Fragrance Incense Studio (*Zhuanxiang huashi wenji* 篆香畫室文集)

Chuk Mor's collected works, entitled *Complete Works from the Zhuanxiang Studio* (*Zhuanxiang huashi wenji* 篆香畫室文集), was first published by the Triple Wisdom Hall in 1968. A second edition was published posthumously in 2003. The volumes of these collected works are as listed below.

1. *Lectures on the Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing jianghua* 金剛經講話)
2. *Lectures on the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* [Part 1] (*Weimojie jing jianghua* 維摩詰經講話)
3. *Lectures on the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* [Part 2] (*Weimojie jing jianghua* 維摩詰經講話)
4. *Lectures on the Heart Sūtra* (*Bore Xinjing jianghua* 般若心經講話)
5. *Lectures on the Chapter of the Universal Gate of the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva* (*Guanyin pusa pumen pin jiangyao* 觀音菩薩普門品講要)
6. *An Overview of the Kṣitigarbha Sūtra* (*Dizang jing gaishuo* 地藏經概說)
7. *Lectures on the Ten Vows of the Samantabhadra Bodhisattva* (*Puxian shiyuan jianghua* 普賢十願講話)
8. *Lectures on the Bhaiṣajyaguru and Others* (*Yaoshi fo jiangyao ji qita* 藥師佛講要及其他)
9. *Lectures on the Amitābha Sūtra* (*Amituo jing jiangyao* 阿彌陀經講要)

10. *Collected Writings on the Pure Land Teachings* (*Jingtu famen congtan* 淨土法門叢譚)
11. *Questions and Answers on Buddhist Studies* [Part 1] (*Foxue wenda* 佛學問答)
12. *Questions and Answers on Buddhist Studies* [Part 2] (*Foxue wenda* 佛學問答)
13. *Buddhist Education and Culture* (*Fojiao jiaoyu yu wenhua* 佛教教育與文化)
14. *Discussions on Questions surrounding Buddhist Studies* (*Foxue wenti zuotan* 佛學問題座談)
15. *Notes on Journey to the South* (*Nanyou jiyu* 南遊寄語)
16. *Buddhism and Human-life* (*Fojiao yu rensheng* 佛教與人生)
17. *Words of Enlightenment* (*Zhengjue de qishi* 正覺的啟示)
18. *Recognize Your Own Philosophy* (*Renshi ziji de zhexue* 認識自己的哲學)
19. *Lectures on Buddhism Part 1* (*Fojiao yanjiang ji shang* 佛教演講集上)
20. *Lectures on Buddhism Part 2* (*Fojiao yanjiang ji xia* 佛教演講集下)
21. *Current Issues on Buddhism* (*Fojiao shishi ganyan* 佛教時事感言)
22. *Dharma Quotes* (*Fayu lu* 法語錄)
23. *Collected Essays on Buddhist Principles* (*Foli lunwen ji* 佛理論文集)
24. *Elementary Buddhist Studies Textbook* (*Chuji foxue duben* 初級佛學讀本)
25. *Lectures on Vinaya Studies* (*Jiexue jiangji* 戒學講記)
26. *Itinerant Life Over the Ages* (*Xingjiao guo qianqiu* 行腳過千秋)

APPENDIX 3

Collected Works of Mindful Observation (*Diguan quanji* 諦觀全集)

Yen Pei's *Collected Works of Mindful Observation* was organized into five categories, namely, Sūtra Commentary (*jingshi* 經釋), Vinaya Commentary (*lüshi* 律釋), Abhidharma Commentary (*lunshi* 論釋), Render Freely (*yishu* 譯述), and Miscellaneous Sayings (*zashuo* 雜說).[1] The *Collected Works of Mindful Observation* was first published in 28 volumes by Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium (*Lingfeng bore jiangtang* 靈峰般若講堂) in Singapore and Hui Jih Auditorium (*Huiri jiangtang* 慧日講堂) in Taipei in conjunction with the celebration of Yen Pei's sixtieth birthday in 1977. The collection was widely circulated in a set, but also in individual copies in Singapore and in many parts of the Chinese-speaking world. Subsequently, Heavenly Lotus Publishing (*Tianhua chubanshe* 天華出版社), a Buddhist publishing company, took over the publication of the collected works in 1980, and reorganized the 28 volumes to 34.[2]

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[1] Yen Pei, "Zixu 自序," in *Diguang quanji* 諦觀全集 (Taipei: Tianhua chubanshe, 1988), 15-19.

[2] The 34-volume Heavenly Lotus Publishing edition is the most widely circulated version of the collected works. Liao, "Yanpei fashi de zhuzuo nianpu," vi, 167-168.

Zhengwen Publishing (*Zhengwen chubanshe* 正聞出版社) by Leng Foong Prajñā Auditorium and Hui Jih Auditorium	**Heavenly Lotus Publishing (*Tianhua chubanshe* 天華出版社)**
i) Sūtra Commentary (*jingshi* 經釋)	
1. *Lectures on the Sūtra on the Ten Wholesome Ways of Action* (*Shishan yedao jing jiangji* 十善業道經講記), *Lectures on the Sūtra on the Eight Kinds of Attentiveness of Great Persons* (*Bada renjue jing jiangji* 八大人覺經講記), *Lectures on the Sumati-dārikā-paripṛcchā-sūtra* (*Miaohui tongnü jing jiangji* 妙慧童女經講記) 2. *Lectures on the Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang bore jing jiangji* 金剛般若經講記), *Lectures on the Heart Sūtra* (*Bore xinjing jiangji* 般若心經講記), *Lectures on the Emptiness Chapter of the Golden Light Sūtra* (*Jin guangming jing kongpin jiangji* 金光明經空品講記) 3. *Explanations on the Sūtra of Understanding Profound and Esoteric Doctrine* (*Jie shenmi jing shi* 解深密經釋) 4. *Lectures on the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra Part 1* (*Weimojie jing jiangji shang* 維摩詰經講記上) 5. *Lectures on the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra Part 2* (*Weimojie jing jianghua xia* 維摩詰經講記下) 6. *Lectures on the Chapter on the Vows of Samantabhadra* (*Puxian xingyuan pin jiangji* 普賢行願品講	1. *Lectures on the Sūtra on the Ten Wholesome Ways of Action* (*Shishan yedao jing jiangji* 十善業道經講記), *Lectures on the Sūtra on the Eight Kinds of Attentiveness of Great Persons* (*Bada renjue jing jiangji* 八大人覺經講記) 2. *Lectures on the Sumati-dārikā-paripṛcchā-sūtra* (*Miaohui tongnü jing jiangji* 妙慧童女經講記) 3. *Lectures on the Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang bore jing jiangji* 金剛般若經講記), *Essence of the Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing gaiyao* 金剛經概要), *Lectures on the Emptiness Chapter of the Golden Light Sūtra* (*Jin guangming jing kongpin jiangji* 金光明經空品講記) 4. *Lectures on the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra Part 1* (*Weimojie jing jiangji shang* 維摩詰經講記上) 5. *Lectures on the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra Part 2* (*Weimojie jing jianghua xia* 維摩詰經講記下) 6. *Lectures on the Heart Sūtra* (*Bore xinjing jiangji* 般若心經講記), *Twelve Lectures on the Heart Sūtra* (*Xinjing shier jiang* 心經十二講) 7. *Explanations on the Sūtra of Understanding Profound and*

記), *Lectures on the Chapter of the Universal Gate of the Avalokiteśvara* (*Guanyin pumen pin jiangji* 觀音菩薩普門品講記)	*Esoteric Doctrine* (*Jie shenmi jing shi* 解深密經釋) 8. *Lectures on the Chapter on the Vows of Samantabhadra of the Flower Garland Sūtra* (*Huayan jing Puxian xingyuan pin jiangji* 華嚴經普賢行願品講記) 9. *Lectures on the Chapter of the Universal Gate of the Avalokiteśvara* (*Guanyin pumen pin jiangji* 觀音菩薩普門品講記)
ii) Vinaya Commentary (*lüshi* 律釋)	
7. *Lectures on the Brahmajāla-sūtra* (*Fanwang jing jiangji* 梵網經講記)	10. *Lectures on the Brahmajāla Bodhisattva śīla Sūtra Part 1* (*Fanwang jing pusa jieben jiangji shang* 梵網經菩薩戒本講記上) with *Ten Lectures on the Eight Precepts* (*Baguan zhaijie shijiang* 八關齋戒十講) 11. *Lectures on the Brahmajāla Bodhisattva śīla Sūtra Part 2* (*Fanwang jing pusa jieben jiangji xia* 梵網經菩薩戒本講記下) with *Ten Lectures on the Eight Precepts* (*Baguan zhaijie shijiang* 八關齋戒十講)
iii) Abhidharma Commentary (*lunshi* 論釋)	
8. *Lectures on the Verses of Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya Part 1* (*Jushe lunsong jiangji shang* 俱舍論頌講記上) 9. *Lectures on the Verses of Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya Part 2* (*Jushe lunsong jiangji zhong* 俱舍論頌講記中)	12. *Lectures on the Verses of Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya Part 1* (*Jushe lunsong jiangji shang* 俱舍論頌講記上) 13. *Lectures on the Verses of Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya Part 2* (*Jushe lunsong jiangji zhong* 俱舍論頌講記中)

10. *Lectures on the Verses of Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya Part 3* (*Jushe lunsong jiangji xia* 俱舍論頌講記下)

11. *Explanations on the Linguistic Style of the Treatise of the Wheel of the Different Divisions of the Tenets* (*Yibu zonglun lun yuti shi* 異部宗輪論語體釋), *Lectures on the Advice to Aspire for Enlightenment* (*Quan fa putixin wen jiangji* 勸發菩提心文講記)

12. *Lectures on the Twenty Verses on Consciousness-Only* (*Weishi ershi song jiangji* 唯識二十頌講記), *Lectures on the Verses on the Structure of the Eight Consciousnesses* (*Bashi guiju song jiangji* 八識規矩頌講記)

13. *Lectures on the Verses on Madhyamakâvatāra* (*Ru zhonglun song jiangji* 入中論頌講記)

14. *Lectures on the Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only Volume 1* (*Cheng weishi lun jiangji yi*成唯識論講記一)

15. *Lectures on the Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only Volume 2* (*Cheng weishi lun jiangji er*成唯識論講記二)

16. *Lectures on the Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only Volume 3* (*Cheng weishi lun jiangji san* 成唯識論講記三)

14. *Lectures on the Verses of Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya Part 3* (*Jushe lunsong jiangji xia* 俱舍論頌講記下)

15. *Lectures on the Twenty Verses on Consciousness-Only* (*Weishi ershi song jiangji* 唯識二十頌講記), *Lectures on the Verses on the Structure of the Eight Consciousnesses* (*Bashi guiju song jiangji* 八識規矩頌講記)

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18. *Lectures on the Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only Volume 2* (*Cheng weishi lun jiangji er* 成唯識論講記二)

19. *Lectures on the Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only Volume 3* (*Cheng weishi lun jiangji san* 成唯識論講記三)

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21. *Lectures on the Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only Volume 5* (*Cheng weishi lun jiangji wu* 成唯識論講記五)

17. *Lectures on the Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only Volume 4* (*Cheng weishi lun jiangji si*成唯識論講記四) 18. *Lectures on the Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only Volume 5* (*Cheng weishi lun jiangji wu* 成唯識論講記五)	22. *Explanations on the Linguistic Style of the Treatise of the Wheel of the Different Divisions of the Tenets* (*Yibu zonglun lun yuti shi* 異部宗輪論語體釋) 23. *Lectures on the Advice to Aspire for Enlightenment* (*Quan fa putixin wen jiangji* 勸發菩提心文講記)
iv) Render Freely (*yishu* 譯述)	
19. *Treatise on Mahāyāna Thought* (*Dacheng sixiang lun* 大乘思想論) 20. *Hīnayāna Buddhist Thought* (Xiaocheng fojiao sixiang 小乘佛教思想) 21. *Treatise on the Tiantai Idea of Intrinsic Inclusiveness* (*Tiantai xingju sixiang lun* 天台性具思想論), *Twelve Lectures on the Heart Sūtra* (*Xinjing shier jiang* 心經十二講), and Essays on "Aryan Culture and the Establishment of Buddhism" (*Ali'an wenhua yu fojiao de chengli* 阿利安文化與佛教的的成立), "The Logic of Causal Relations in the *Madhyamaka-śāstra*" (*Zhonglun xiangguanxing de lunli* 中論相關性的論理), "Explanation of the *Yogâcārabhūmi-śāstra*" (*Yuqie shidi lun jieti* 瑜伽師地論解題), "Explanation on the *Mahāyāna saṃgraha-śāstra*" (*She dacheng lun tijie* 攝大乘論題解)	24. *Treatise on Mahāyāna Thought* (*Dacheng sixiang lun* 大乘思想論) 25. *Hīnayāna Buddhist Thought* (Xiaocheng fojiao sixiang 小乘佛教思想) 26. *Treatise on the Tiantai Idea of Intrinsic Inclusiveness* (*Tiantai xingju sixiang lun* 天台性具思想論)

v) Miscellaneous Sayings (*zashuo* 雜說)	
22. *The Buddhist Concept of Dependent Arising* (*Fojiao de yuanqi guan* 佛教的緣起觀), *The Evolution of Characteristics of Phenomena and Consciousness-Only Thought* (*Faxiang weishi jiqi sixiang yanbian* 法相唯識及其思想演變) 23. *Essence of the Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing gaiyao* 金剛經概要), *Ten Lectures on the Eight Precepts* (*Baguan zhaijie shijiang* 八關齋戒十講), *The Ideas of Indian Nikāya Buddhism* (*Yindu bupai fojiao sixiang guan* 印度部派佛教思想觀), *Humanistic Buddha* (*Renjian fotuo* 人間佛陀) 24. *Teaching [the Dharma] in the South* (*Nantian youhua* 南天遊化) 25. *Collection on Dharma Propagation* (*Fayu bianshi ji* 法雨徧施集) 26. *Collection on Lectures in Singapore* (*Shicheng yanshuo ji* 獅城演說集) 27. *Collected Miscellaneous Sayings at Celebrations and Mourning Part 1* (*Qingdao zashuo ji shang* 慶悼雜說集上) 28. *Collected Miscellaneous Sayings at Celebrations and Mourning Part 2* (*Qingdao zashuo ji xia* 慶悼雜說集下)	27. *The Buddhist Concept of Dependent Arising* (*Fojiao de yuanqi guan* 佛教的緣起觀) 28. *The Evolution of Characteristics of Phenomena and Consciousness-Only Thought* (*Faxiang weishi jiqi sixiang yanbian* 法相唯識及其思想演變) 29. *The Ideas of Indian Nikāya Buddhism* (*Yindu bupai fojiao sixiang guan* 印度部派佛教思想觀), *Humanistic Buddha* (*Renjian fotuo* 人間佛陀) 30. *Teaching [the Dharma] in the South* (*Nantian youhua* 南天遊化) 31. *Collection on Dharma Propagation* (*Fayu bianshi ji* 法雨徧施集) 32. *Collection on Lectures in Singapore* (*Shicheng yanshuo ji* 獅城演說集) 33. *Collected Miscellaneous Sayings at Celebrations and Mourning Part 1* (*Qingdao zashuo ji shang* 慶悼雜說集上) 34. *Collected Miscellaneous Sayings at Celebrations and Mourning Part 2* (*Qingdao zashuo ji xia* 慶悼雜說集下)

APPENDIX 4

A Sequel to the [Collected Works of] Mindful Observation (*Diguan xuji* 諦觀續集)

Yen Pei's writings after the age of sixty were collected and published in the 12-volume *A Sequel to the [Collected Works of] Mindful Observation*. The volumes of these collected works are as listed below.

1. *Lectures on the Heart Sūtra* (*Bore Xinjing jiangji* 般若心經講記)
2. *Lectures on the Bhaiṣajyaguru-vaiḍurya-prabha-rāja Sūtra* (*Yaoshi jing jiangji* 藥師經講記)
3. *Lectures on the Sūtra of Maitreya Bodhisattva's Attainment of Buddhahood (Mile dachengfo jing jiangji* 彌勒大成佛經講記)
4. *Lectures on the Śrīmālā Sūtra* (*Shengman jing jiang ji* 勝鬘經講記)
5. *Lectures on the Essence of the Vinaya for Daily Use* (*Pini riyong qieyao jiangji* 毘尼日用切要講記)
6. *Lectures on The Way to Buddhahood Verses Part 1* (*Chengfo zi dao jisong jiangji shang* 成佛之道偈頌講記上)
7. *Lectures on The Way to Buddhahood Verses Part 2* (*Chengfo zi dao jisong jiangji xia* 成佛之道偈頌講記下)
8. *Lecture on the Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance* (*Cibei sanmei shuichan jiangji* 慈悲三昧水懺講記)
9. *Confessions of an Ordinary and Foolish Monk* (*Yige fanyu seng de zibai* 一個凡愚僧的自白)

10. *Explanations on the Song of Triple Gem* (*Sanbao ge jieshuo* 三寶歌解說) and (*Karma and Rebirth that arises from Karma* 業及因業而有的輪迴)
11. *Collected Miscellaneous Sayings at Celebrations and Mourning Part 1* (*Qingdao zashuo ji shang* 慶悼雜說集上)
12. *Collected Miscellaneous Sayings at Celebrations and Mourning Part 2* (*Qingdao zashuo ji xia* 慶悼雜說集下)

APPENDIX 5

Sacred Scriptures of Indonesian Buddhism (*Kitab-Kitab Suci Agama Buddha Indonesia*)[3]

The sacred scriptures of Indonesian Buddhism consist of:

1. Pāli Piṭaka, or sacred texts in the Pāli-language (12.261; 25.138; 15. Ox)
2. Sanskrit Piṭaka, or sacred texts in the Sanskrit-language, and
3. Kawi Piṭaka, or sacred texts in the Kawi-language (Ancient Kawi) (25.93; 140)

Details of the outline are as follows:

Pāli Piṭaka:

1. Vinaya Piṭaka
2. Sūtta Piṭaka
3. Abhidhamma Piṭaka

Sanskrit Piṭaka:

1. Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra (25.396)
2. Avataṃsaka (14.96)
3. Gaṇḍavyūha (14.96)
4. Daśabhūmika (14.96)
5. Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa (12.192)
6. Śūraṅgama Samādhi (25.433)
7. Saddharma Puṇḍarīka (20.00; 13.00)
8. Śrīmālādevī (39)
9. Sukhāvatī Vyūha (29.II.01; 14.96)

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[3] Translation mine with diacritic added. See "Kitab-Kitab Suci Agama Buddha Indonesia," in *Doktrin Sanghyang Adi Buddha*, 6-7.

10. Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra (25.382; 14.96)
11. Laṅkāvatāra (25.382; 14.96)
12. Vajraśekhara (39)
13. Mahāyāna Sraddhopada Śāstra (39)
14. Mahā Karmavibhangga (39)
15. Lalitavistara (12.134)
16. Jātaka (12.32)
17. Avadāna (12.134)
18. Nirvāṇa (12.286)
19. Amitāyurdhyāna (12.254)
20. Vajracchedikā Sūtra (25.397)
21. Kāraṇḍa Vyūha (14.96)
22. Karuṇā Puṇḍarīka (14.96)
23. Rāṣṭrapāla (14.96)
24. Samādhirāja (14.96)
25. Mahāyānaabhidharma (39)
26. Saṃdhinirmocana (39)
27. Mūlamadhyamaka (39)
28. Amitābha Sūtra (12.284)
29. Guṇakaraṇḍa (12.284)
30. Kāśyapaparivata (12.96)
31. Śālistamba (12.96)
32. Suvarṇaprabhāsa and others

Kawi Piṭaka

1. Sanghyang Kamahāyānikan
2. Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan Mantranaya
3. Kuñjarakarna
4. Sutasoma and others

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